

UK **Rock & Roll** MAGAZINE



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ISSUE 245 Sept 2024 £4.49



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We're pleased to have insights into the rockin' lives of two significant members of the rockin' community this month - from the USA, Laura 'Rebel Angel', who's just finished a UK tour and touched base with Kate Allvey, and from a bit closer to home in Leicester, Nick Whitfield, in conversation with Nick Kemp. Fascinating stuff is revealed by both, I hope you agree. Elsewhere there's a review of another band led by a 'son of Leicester', Romeo Challenger's Showaddywaddy, and despite their lineup changes over the years and the protetations of the purists, they still appear to be putting on a great show!

Rock On

Johnny Hop

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Rock & Roll

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PUBLISHER

Silverback Publishing Ltd

Publisher: Tom Saunders

Managing Director: Andrew Crispin

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1

Hot Dog!



If you made your way to the Rockin Roundup in Somerset this year, then you were lucky enough to catch the fabulous Dani West and the Southernnaires in their natural environment. Vocalist Dani West's timeless country-tinged twang could have come from a tinny southern studio far in the rockin' past, and must have set the room on fire. "In the words of Eddie Cochran, it was 'Somethin' Else'", exclaims West. "To be able to perform in front of such an appreciative crowd, it was a total honour! We are extremely grateful to Ian and Alan for the opportunity and hope to return in the future."

Their sound harkens back to the days when the boundaries between genres mingled freely. "Our sound is a harmonised collaboration of blues, country and rockabilly,"

Dani West And The Southernnaires

says West. "We are an extremely versatile band which creates an exciting tapestry of sounds. Heartfelt ballads, through to gut wrenching blues.. we can do it all! We also offer a strict country set on request." Songs like 'Oh I Like It' burst with tripping country rhythm and flirtatious vocal flexing, whereas 'If I'm Dreaming Let Me Dream' showcase West's wail backed by adorable harmonies and more than enough classic guitar to fill in the rest of the rock n roll sound. Their update of Mimi Roman's 'Wrap It Up And Save It' paints the iconic guitar rhythm with technicolour and preppy,

upbeat style. If we're talking covers, taking on Johnny Cash's 'Jackson' is a great choice, with Steel switching to rhythm and dancing his way through the gorgeous duet when they perform it live.

While that might be many people's introduction to the Southernnaires sound, you might find a familiar face in their lineup. Alongside Dani West, Ian Speller on guitar, bassist Tony Biggs and drummer Paul Sanders in none other than Rusti Steel on rhythm and steel guitar. In fact, the Star Tones frontman was instrumental in founding the Southernnaires, as West explains: "Dani West and The Southernnaires originally

formed in the early millennium. Having had the fantastic opportunity to guest appear with Rusti Steel & The Tin Tax a discussion to start a

female fronted band happened and prompted the formation of Dani West and The Southernnaires."

West's musical journey began a lot earlier though. "I started singing from a very tender age," she shares. "I guess some would say it's in the blood. My paternal grandmother was a Jazz singer and pianist and my grandfather, a drummer. My parent's love of roots music was a huge influence. We always had a jukebox in the family home and I had my own record player; I loved nothing more than playing my parents collection in my bedroom. My mum was (and continues to be) a massive

support and my biggest fan. She forever encouraged my love of singing. I cannot recall the amount of hours spent together practising. We had a lot of fun at home, with music always being at the centre of it.” When asked about her musical history in bands, West laughs. “Well,... me, my mum and sister often performed in the kitchen with makeshift musical instruments from the kitchen utensils pot if that counts? Our rendition of Cotton Eyed Joe was second to none!” Fortunately, she quickly branched out from kitchen covers. “Although I have guest appeared with a few other bands in my time, Dani West and The Southernaires is the only band I’ve had. The Southernaires are considered some of the best on the scene, especially on the country scene having previously won the CMA in 1999 for their Hank Williams tribute album with their former band(s) Rusti Steel & The Tin Tax and The Rimshots. I feel so grateful and honoured to be backed by such fantastic and accomplished musicians.” There’s another stellar name in their past that’s a huge career highlight for West: “Our biggest all-time highlight was supporting Bill Haley’s Comets on their UK tour in 2003. [It’s] something we will never forget.”



It’s the classic sounds of the Sun era that inspire West as a vocalist. “I guess my biggest influences from a young age were Brenda Lee and Elvis. My country influences came later when I was introduced to the phenomenal Patsy Cline through my step dad. I’ve recently started to play around, writing my own material the inspiration came whilst listening to Sierra Ferrell and Hank Williams. I loved the phrasing that Brenda Lee used. I’d spend hours

trying to imitate this from a young age.” West was fortunate enough to meet her hero, which must have been a tremendous experience. “When I was ten I was invited on stage by Brenda Lee to sing with her during her UK tour at the Colston Hall [in Bristol]. I couldn’t believe it when she called my name out to join her; unbeknown to me, my mum had wrote to her management team to express my adoration for her. It was a beautiful and surreal moment. We sang ‘Sweet Nothings’ together. Brenda was such a lovely lady which gave her time without question. The invitation extended to the next morning where me and my mum went for breakfast at her hotel; Here she wrote out her home address and explained if we ever came to the USA, she’d take us to the Opry as her guests. Although we weren’t able to get to the USA back then, it still remains a dream to visit Nashville. I’ll keep manifesting in the meantime.”

Before West answers the call to America, she’s got a busy schedule in the UK for 2025. “Next year looks to be an

exciting one with our pending Rockabilly Rave debut! We cannot wait to grace that stage and are already working on our set! It’s going to be something special. We are also working on some original material, which is super exciting.” The originals will form part of the long-awaited Dani West and the Southernaires debut album. “Yes, it’s been a long time coming. 20 years in fact! As soon as we reformed back in 2022, it was something we wanted to start working on as soon as possible. We’ve started recording and hopeful for it to be available early 2025. People can expect a country and rockabilly album with a few curveballs chucked in for good measure.” You’ll also be able to catch them at Rockin By the Sea on Nov 17th at Highridge Community Hall, Somerset, and don’t forget to pack both your cowboy boots and your best dancing shoes.

Kate Allvey.
Photos Tony
Bruce



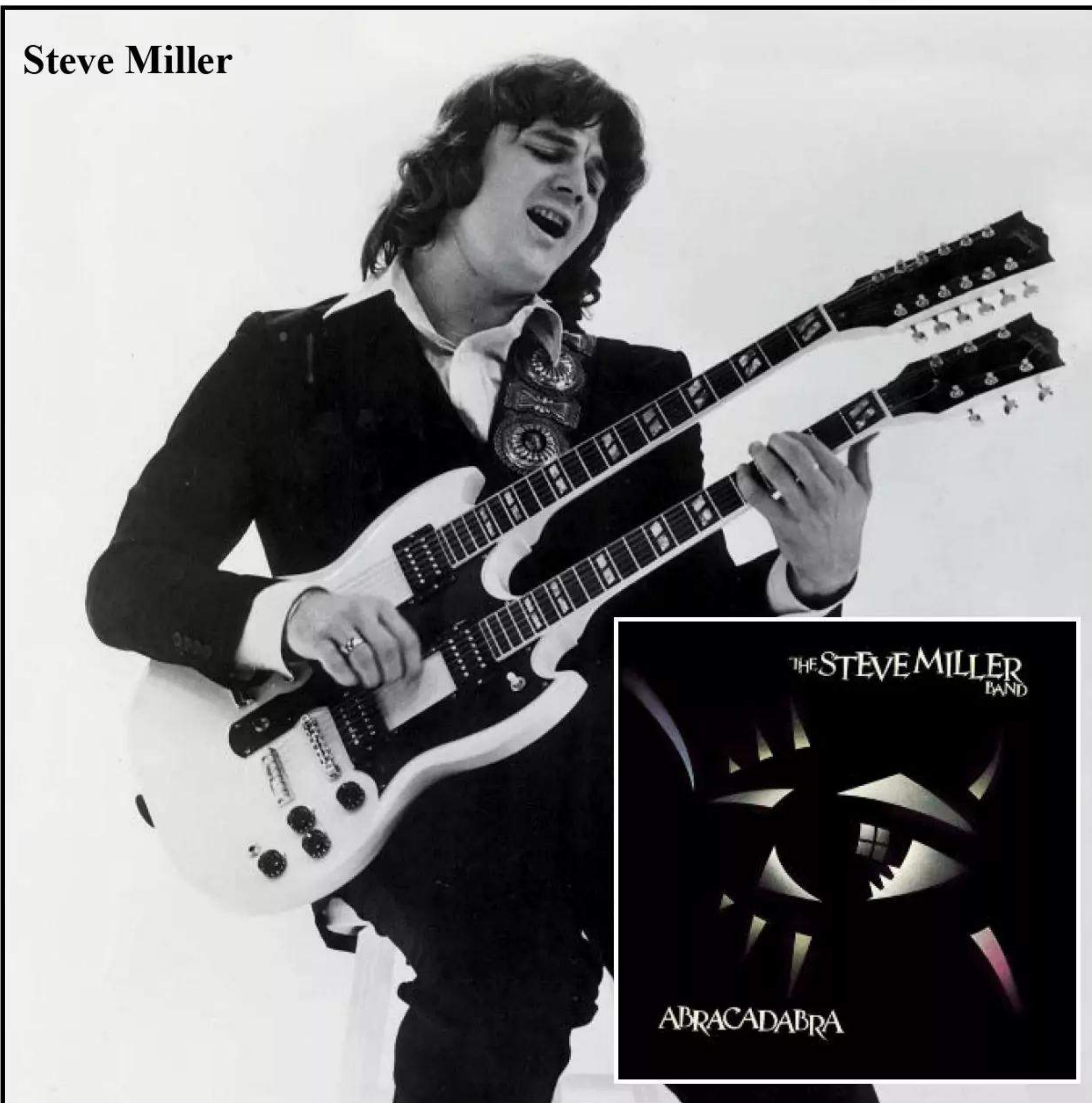
HIP HIT Mick Stott's PARADE

This month's starting point is June 1982 when the Steve Miller Band entered the NME top 30 albums with undoubtedly, it's career album, and single, 'Abracadabra'.

Skipping numerous tabulations to get to this one is necessary with rockin' as rare as searching for an all-dayer / weekender not touting yet another incessant Gene 'n' Eddie tribute! Miller's pedigree started long before this point going back decades no doubt furthering his rock'n'roll credentials from the start with his band appearing on Chuck Berry's 'Live At the Fillmore' 1967 album and further, at least in the UK, would undertake an

appearance at the 1975 Knebworth Festival. So, quite the veteran by the time of 'Abracadabra' surfaced and career album hardly does it justice rapidly becoming a genuine million seller peaking at No. 3 Stateside, top ten in the UK where it would amass a presence of 16 weeks and combined siring 4 transatlantic hit singles from it's 12 tracks. The title track spent 5 weeks atop Cashbox in the US and 1 week atop the NME in the UK. So, what's it all about? Well it's not going to inspire a collision of wreckin' or rip the paint off the walls but the title

Steve Miller



track has a driving, repetitive rhythm throughout that'll grab you and shove you onto a tempting dance floor and won't let go until it's 3 minutes are spent, only let down with a too lengthy ending that doesn't know when to stop, we've all come across them when all you wanna hear is a crashing drum roll to end it for gawd's sake! The single was eventually followed by one more modest hit from the collection 'Keep Me Wondering Why' peaking just outside the top 50. It has some sweet percussion and teeny lyrics I quite liked. Another

inclusion titled 'Give It Up' starts with prominent bv's immediately giving off a strong doo wop vibe and never completely leaves the album as it gradually drifts into a soft rock sort of collection reminiscent of what Rick Nelson and even Bob Luman turned to late on. Although in contrast to that, I found 'Goodbye Love' with Miller's strong vocals here benefiting from Four Seasons type of harmonies while the final inclusion, 'While I'm Waiting' possesses a riff reminding me of the Searchers 'When You Walk In The Room'. But, soft

rock or not, it didn't defect from Steve Miller's eventual induction into the fabled Rock & Roll Hall Of Fame in 2016.

Unusually for the times, the inner sleeve to the album comes with a complete lyrical sheet for all titles and confirms it's entire content all composed by varying members of the band...then! The band did have a high turnover but, on these sessions included Steve up front on vocals, guitar and production, Gary Mallaber drums, keyboards and production, Kenny Lee Lewis, guitar, Gerald Johnson, bass, John Massaro, guitars and Byron Allread, keyboards and

synthesizer. What more could you possibly want to know? He has continued albeit in a lower profile into the 21st century, his most recent album 'Let Your Hair Down' appearing in 2011 while a 'Complete Greatest Hits' on Capitol went gold making the top 40 on the Billboard 200 preceded it and included, guess what, 'Abracadabra'!

Making a fleeting one week appearance on the May 7th 1983 in the recently expanded top 50 NME album chart at 45 otherwise it wouldn't have qualified, none

other than an Elvis Presley 'Jailhouse Rock' album boosted with tracks from the 'Love In Las Vegas' soundtrack. In 1957 the 'Jailhouse Rock' soundtrack was released on a 5 track EP accumulating sales that qualified a position in the singles chart at the time and was deemed a prized possession then and anyone who owned a copy was considered the real deal commanding similar respect that this collectable EP received!

Coincidentally, that very same week of May 7th 1983 Phil Everly made an equally fleeting appearance of one week at 47 with his self titled 11 track Capitol album co-composing 7 of the inclusions. By no means strict rock'n'roll but Phil's pedigree plus some stellar names involved gives it gravitas. Names like Cliff Richard duetting on two tracks including the top ten hit 'She Means Nothing To Me' with Mark Knopfler also present, Stu Colman busy on bass while producing many of the tracks, and all in all, perhaps raising highbrows that it didn't make a bigger impression.

Entering the same chart on June 4th 1983 at No. 28 was 'Another Perfect Day' by Motorhead. It would peak at a modest 20 following a chart topping album 2 years previous from this band. But then it was no stranger to hit records, amassing a total of 18 albums and likewise 18 singles including 3 EP's which, ignoring such bands as the Beatles, Stones, Quo, etc. who became part of pop culture, compares impressively alongside contemporaries who stuck single mindedly to the big beat whether described as rock or rock'n'roll. Few of them can compete with



Motorhead

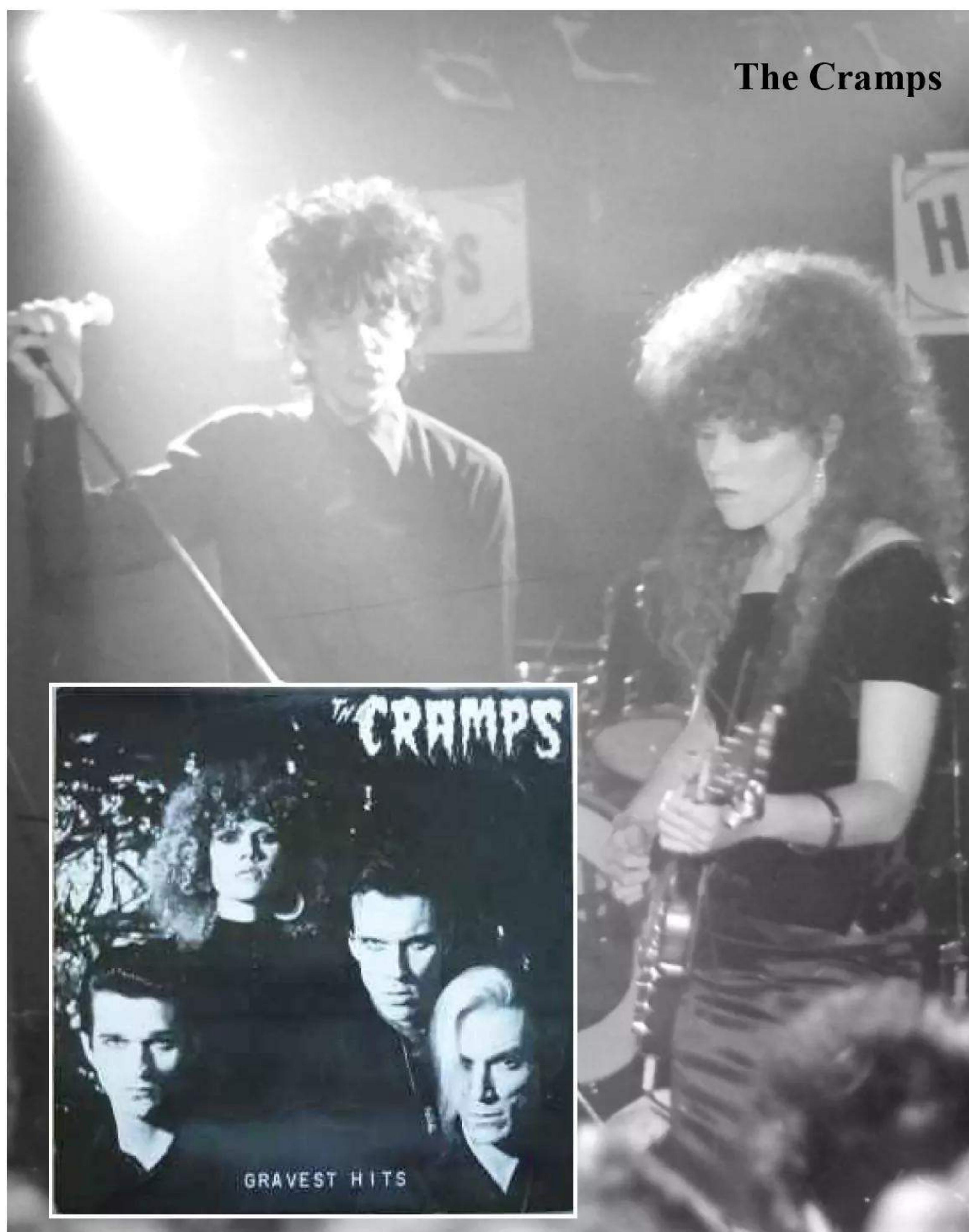
that. Yet the same domination is not reflected in the annual polls unless you read 'Sounds' that is whose readers lapped them up! Patiently trawling through them in their entirety, surprisingly NME readers were the first to recognise the band naming Lemmy 7th best

bass player in '79, then 9th in '81 recalling the old joke, as a singer he was the 7th best bass player! But it was Sounds who recognised the band and it's personnel, in 1980 naming Motorhead 4th top band, 5th live act and Phil Taylor who had never played

professionally pre Motorhead 6th top drummer. 1981 the band virtually achieved a clean sweep as nation's top band, Taylor 3rd drummer, Fast Eddie Clarke 7th guitarist while 'Ace Of Spades' was top album and top single/EP and Lemmy this time 2nd sex object, recalling that old joke again...! In 1982 Motorhead was voted 3rd top band, Lemmy 9th top singer and top bass man, Taylor 3rd top drummer, Eddie Clarke 5th on guitar, and it's 'No Sleep Til Hammersmith' the

nation's top album while 'Motorhead Live' was 2nd single/EP. Lemmy retained his title as top bassist again in 1983 but fell to 3rd in '84 after which the band commenced a steady decline at least in the polls. Legend has it Ian Kilmister, alias

Lemmy, apparently acquired that hook through his insistent plea "lend me a quid" and true or not it stuck to the end, many like me unaware of his full name! He was born on Christmas Eve 1945 in Stoke On Trent and experienced a raw upbringing and didn't enjoy schooldays at all but salvation came upon discovering the music of Little Richard, Jerry Lee and Chuck Berry, where he couldn't wait to pick up a guitar, far less play one and commenced a musical career of sorts around Manchester. He lived a cavalier lifestyle once out of school, becoming roadie for Jimi Hendrix before a move to London led to a stint with Hawkwind fronting the band on it's big seller 'Silver Machine'. This experience was the precursor to what he is remembered for, that is being the charismatic focal point of Motorhead.



The Cramps

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#4

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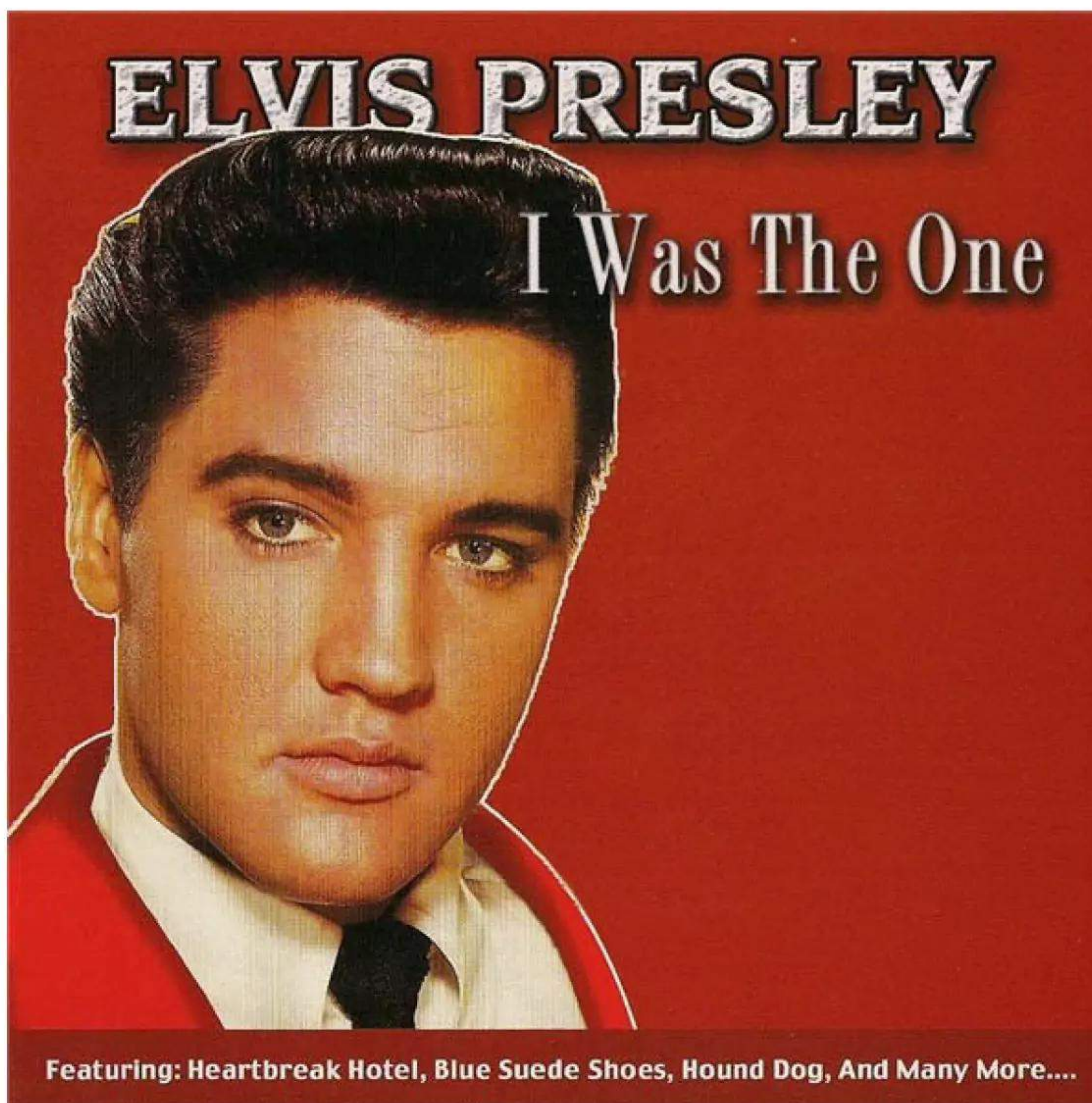
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Bronze Records signed the band in the late seventies and so commenced a lengthy relationship hugely beneficial to the band who scored a modest hit with it's debut release reviving 'Louie, Louie'. Shortly after the band shared credits on an EP with Girlschool with yet again similar success though I suspect purists won't appreciate Lemmy's gravelly vocals at a galling pace all over 'Please Don't Touch'. It is not hard to imagine it not all being hunky dory in any band Lemmy was involved with and so it was that by 1983 Taylor decided to depart following Fast Eddie who had also moved on to pastures new the previous year. The new line up soon returned to Hammersmith Odeon ambitious to turn the clock back retreading past experiences and repeat high points there. The following year the band ended it's allegiance to Bronze Records amid dispute and ultimately was prevented from releasing any product for two years. But once that was solved the hits, both singles and albums, continued unabated in the UK while in the US, not so, with a mere total of 4 LP's breaking into Billboard's Top 200 with a best position of 142 despite Lemmy being resident there since 1990. He eventually died on December 28th 2015 having just passed his 70th birthday. No fan would dispute Lemmy was the epitome of the rock'n'roll lifestyle if not it's architect pushing it to the boundaries having lived the life to the full.

Making a debut appearance in the album charts at 36 on 25th June '83 was the Cramps with 'Off The Bone', it's cult following earning the band a 10 week on and off residency in the NME peaking at 23. The New York City quartet commenced a 30 year career mid seventies with a line up



that was frequently re modelled. As such I can only reference the identity on its 1977 'Gravest Hits' collection in my possession as Lux Interior (Erick Purkhiser actually), spouse Poison Ivy (Kristy Wallace) both started life in Sacramento, California before upping sticks and heading to N.Y.C. like you do and bumping into Brian Gregory, responsible for fractured guitar runs (it says here) and Nick Knox (honest) stoic drummer of the big beat. The band rarely hit the headlines Stateside and never the charts but it's strong underground fan base in the UK which included my daughter, hence this interest, earned the band a couple of modest hit singles plus three further hit albums following this debut, one of which with it's flashy gold cover titled 'A Date With Elvis' seduced me into dipping into my pocket and learning on the cover the band dedicated it to the memory of Ricky Nelson! Among it's content it's NME top thirty hit single 'Can Your Pussy Do The Dog'. It was quickly back in the charts on November 26th '83 with it's following album ' Smell Of Female' but with diminishing returns that a 4 week run and a

peak of 30 suggests. Then a gap of almost 3 years before a final showing in the NME listings with a contender for it's most successful album chart wise, the aforementioned 'Date With Elvis' entering on the first day of March 1986 at the lofty height of 27 commencing a 5 week run. It is helpful to inform it is compiled entirely of Cramps stuff and there's nothing included from Elvis, Presley or Costello! The band ceased in 2009 following the death of founder Lux Interior. Nick Knox passed away in 2018.

Oh, how times had changed. Making a solitary one week appearance in the NME top 50 albums at 49 in the week ending 27th August 1983 then vanishing, no less than Elvis Presley's 16 track RCA compilation, 'I Was The One', the contents dating back to his very first RCA session in 1956. Among such royalty as Scotty, Bill Black, D.J.Fontana, Floyd Cramer and Chet Atkins are the five tracks cut at that historic session including the two sides that compiled that historic HMV POP 182 coupling 'Heartbreak Hotel'/'I Was The One'. The latter had quite a journey then, starting life

underneath Presley's very first transatlantic hit as a modest flip side then promoted 27 years later to the title track. Among it's quartet of composers...yes it took so many for such a simple little ditty... who benefited from being on the flip of the hit side would be two of the most illustrious architects among the bracketed brethren, Claude DeMetrius and Aaron Schroeder, masters of the art not only understanding the rock'n'roll philosophy but building it with their masterpieces, in partnership and apart, with material eagerly pounced upon in the studio by the genre's prophets. This entire collection, compiled around the historical period of Presley's initial RCA

era, I would have expected to be snapped up more than one week in the chart suggests, but nevertheless there would be around another two dozen entries at the last count including a couple of chart toppers following this, emphasising Elvis' prolonged influence just goes on and on.

Finally, a brief acknowledgment this month to the Stray Cats third and penultimate album to qualify for the best selling albums chart and the second produced by the mercurial Dave Edmunds, 'Rant And Rave'.

On 17th September '83 it broke in at 48, rose to 46 then slipped out. 8 of the cuts were composed by Brian Setzer including the provocative hit single '(She's) Sexy And 17' which made 29 in it's most impressive of all the charts in a 9 week run but not in the NME singles chart while the remaining two cuts on the album were co-composed by the trio.

That concludes a varied column, a column that aims to tell it like it finds it!

Mick Stott.



Hot Wax!

Waiting's

Records have been made in every decade since the 1950s that are up to the standard of the best records from the so-called 'golden era' of the 1950s. This column likes to reflect this fact on a frequent basis. Sometimes this is by including a killer CD of brand-new recordings, such as Dylan Kirk's superb CD 'King Of The Hop'. This included brilliant new originals, some self-penned by Dylan, all with a big Jerry Lee Lewis Sun Records influence, and what could be finer. Other times it might be with a more extensive career overview of multiple records such as we did for King Pleasure (June 2024) and Si Cranstoun (March 2024). For some years now, The Senti-Mentals have been releasing CDs of a very high standard, and they are the first focus of this column this month. I have been playing their records a lot ever since their recent appearance at the Burton Latimer Rock 'n' Roll Club All-dayer at Wickstead

Park, which I reviewed in the May 2024 issue of UK Rock. I have three CDs by The Senti-Mentals, so let's examine them now.

The first CD 'Two Heads' was released back in 1998. The two heads refer to the two

brains behind the group and the writers of most of their songs – John Dobinson and Paul Eccentric. Paul handles the lead vocals on most of the songs, while John plays tenor sax and contributes to the background vocals, which are

also handled by other members of the band, which now includes Den Hegarty from Darts on bass vocals. In this way, the group achieve doo-wop-style vocals and group harmonies, along with tenor sax breaks at key points. The group also includes very capable musicians on piano, guitar, bass and drums, and sometimes extra instrumentation provided by John on electric keyboard, although the other musicians have changed between the three CDs. The records are carefully built up in the studio to achieve sounds that rival those of some of their big inspirations, such as The Skyliners who had big hits in the 1950s such as 'Since I Don't Have You' and 'This I Swear'. I thoroughly recommend The Skyliners CD 'Voices In Harmony 1958-1962' by the way, which includes their best recordings, including some that were not hits but are none-the-less very good.





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So, back to 'Two Heads'. High-lights of this CD include 'I Know Why', 'Little white Lies', 'Sisterheart' and 'Gimme Some'. These excellent jivers have been guaranteed dance-floor fillers in rock 'n' roll clubs and weekenders throughout Britain and overseas for many years now. Dee-jays still play them regularly. But other 13 tracks on this CD are also very good and in broadly similar style, making for an enjoyably even listening experience. Most are self-penned by John and/or Paul. The final track 'Funtastico' is a good medium-paced jam-like instrumental mainly led by John on sax.

The second CD I have, 'Who Knows, Who Cares?', was released in 2009. For me, this CD has even more high-lights than the first. I particularly like the way several of the songs are built around familiar and memorable expressions, such as 'A Horse To Water', 'First Bird Calling' and 'Take The Bull By The Horns'. Once again, the overall sound of this CD is reminiscent of American vocal groups of the late 1950s and very early 1960s such as The Skyliners and The Crests. On 'Stop Making Eyes', Den Hegarty takes the lead vocal. His bass voice takes us back a few more years, to groups like Billy Ward's Dominoes, The Du-Droppers and The Cadets. 'Stop Making Eyes' is the track I play more than any other on this CD but, as with the 'Two Heads' CD, playing the whole CD all the way through is a fine listening experience, maintaining an even mood which is the type of CD I generally prefer. My other favourites include 'If I Had My Time Again', 'Just Like Lovers Do', 'The Gleam In Your Eyes' and 'Warning Bells'. All have catchy lyrics and tunes and all but three are by John mainly, sometimes assisted by Paul. As with the first CD, there is one instrumental. This time it is an Artie Shaw Clarinet Concerto

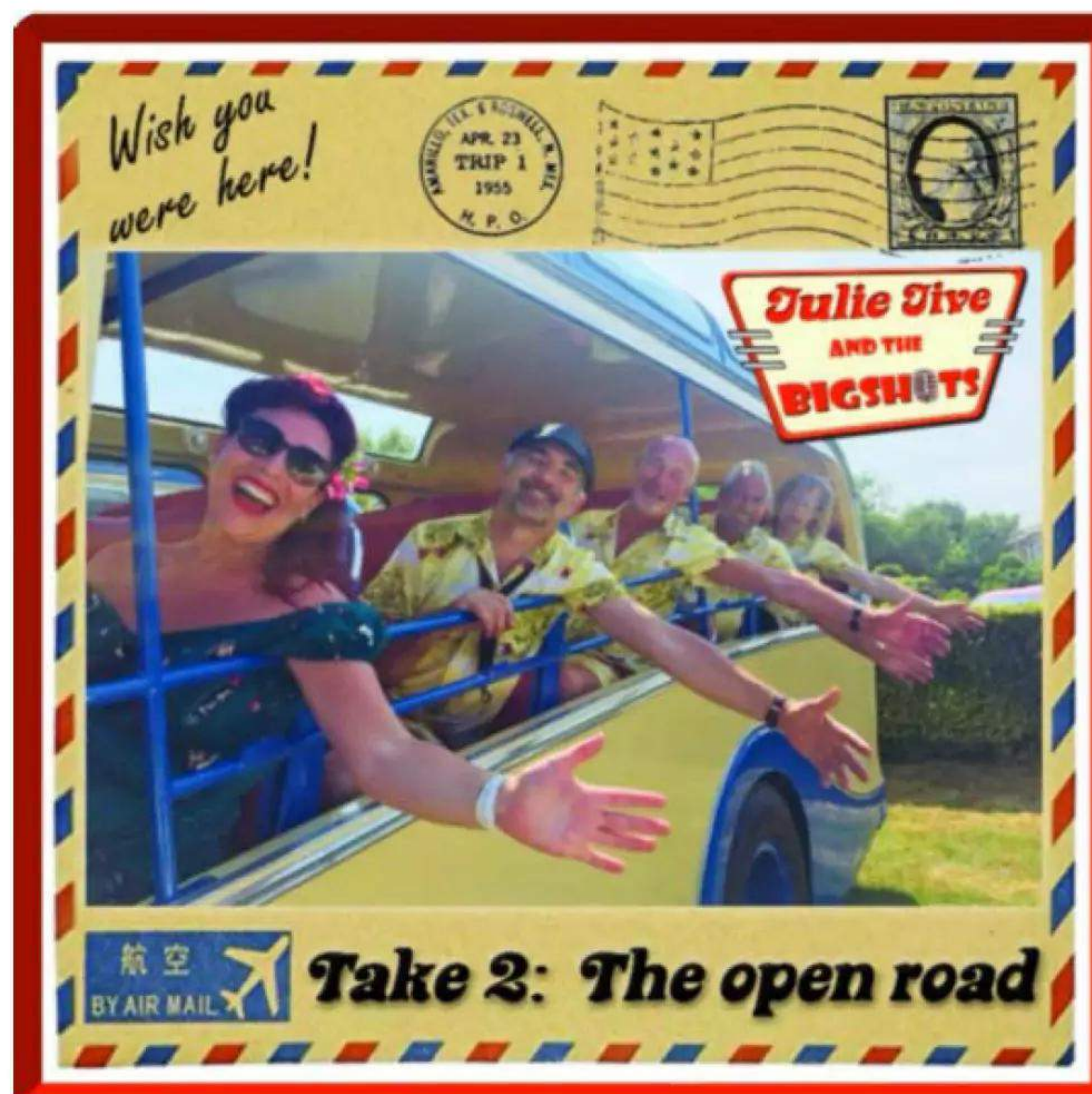


from Artie's much earlier style and is something of a surprise inclusion. 'There's No Moon Out Tonight' is clearly a play on the title of The Capris' wonderful doo-wop classic 'There's A Moon Out Tonight', but the two songs are not especially similar.

the first two CDs. The delicate piano work and the ring of the guitar are particularly fitting for the sophisticated sounds. The first track 'Dance With Me' is a great jiver. Another high-light for me, which I recommend to the dee-jays on the 24-hour rock 'n' roll radio

The Crests, but the song is a slow one, more like some of The Skyliners' ballads. 'Kick In The Head' is reminiscent of Dion & The Belmonts. 'The Rules Of Engagement' has a ska-like but quick guitar up-stroke. Suffice to say there is lots of interest in the other tracks too. On some of the tracks, the layered vocals sound similar to the work of Les Paul with Mary Ford, while the vocals on 'Its Not Just Me' remind me of 'Mr Sandman' by The Chordettes. The spritely 'Out On The Floor' is a fast jiver, while 'Transient Fling' has an inspired Latin tinge. There's one instrumental again – 'John's Boogie' on which John shows off some nimble piano skills.

I trust the above reviews result in further sales of these discs and that The Senti-Mentals are able to play more live dates to promote themselves and their music.



Baritone sax-man Nick Lunt helps out on some numbers, which gives the backing music added depth.

The third CD, another 17-tracker, released in 2021 and just titled 'The Senti-Mentals III', continues the sound this group have established with

stations, is 'What We Know Now' which is a loping boogie with ensemble vocals and an apt sax break. Similarly for 'I Saw This And I Thought Of You' with a jazz-inflected piano solo. 'The Angels Didn't Hear' is a play on the title of 'The Angels Listened In' by Johnny Maestro and

Julie Jive & The Bigshots are certainly making every effort to come to your attention on the rock 'n' roll scene. In the last year alone, I have seen them in local clubs and at several weekenders, as you will have seen from my reviews in this mag. Their live shows are full of both well-known classics and lesser-known songs, almost all of which are good for jivers and strollers. Their 'Take 2: The Open Road' CD reflects that. It also takes the opportunity to present some other types of numbers for variety, some with additional instrumentation, and all the tracks are very well produced. On 'Baby, You Got What It Takes', sax-man Graham duets with Julie and shows that he is a very capable, relaxed singer. The arrangement is both classy and slightly different from the well-known duet between Brook Benton and Dinah Washington On the groovy 'You're The Boss' Graham duets but also plays some steamy sax. On Sam Butera's

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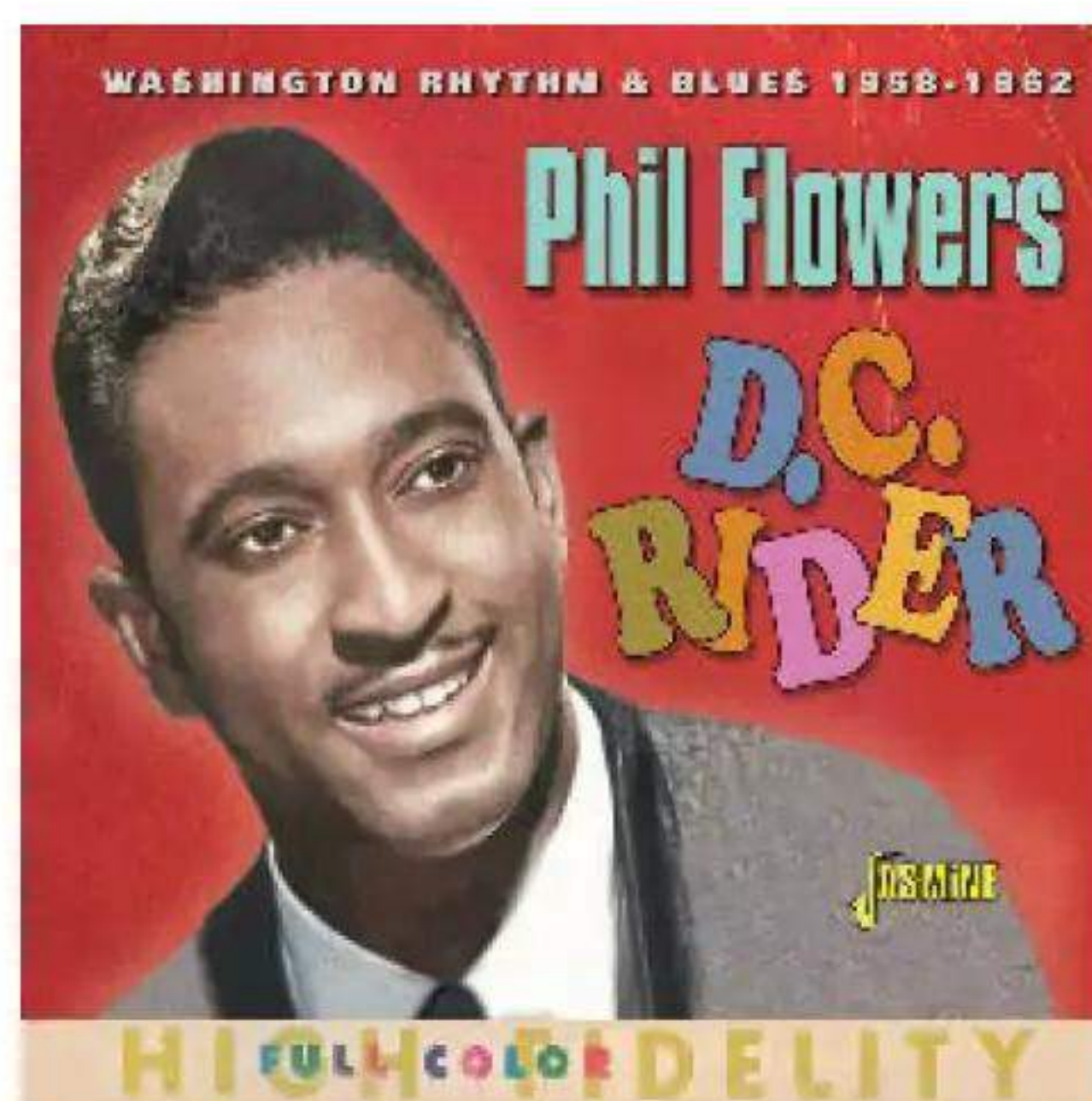
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'Bim Bam' Graham has fun over-dubbing baritone sax onto his usual tenor to beef up the sound, with pleasing results although, like most versions of this song, it doesn't match Sam's original. Johnny Earl's modern classic 'Swing Me Baby' is also given a two-sax treatment, but again it takes a lot to beat Chris Kane's brilliant sax break or the irresistible drive of the original. Through-out the CD Julie sings with enthusiasm and without straying into the screechy sounds so common amongst female singers today, even when using Ruth Brown's trademark squeal in 'Mama, He Treats Your Daughter Mean'. This number swings along nicely, again with added baritone. Guitarist Graham has thought carefully both in achieving a very good sound from his guitar and in playing well-constructed solos and fills throughout the 15 tracks, and the whole band play with a high standard of musicianship, especially evident on Lee Dresser's 'El Camino Real' with the multiple saxes a real treat from Graham. The Champs sax-led instrumental 'Tequila' is given a light-voiced but accomplished single tenor treatment to round out the album. While most of the numbers on this CD are familiar, the band does not produce slavish copies of the originals. The CD is a good listening experience and a fine complement to their live shows.

Mike Sanchez is another current performer that I have raved about for years, in this mag and elsewhere. Fortunately, Mike has achieved a much greater level of recent fame, and interest from the musical press, than many of artists I feature in this column. A full-blown career retrospective of Mike's CDs would fill an entire 'Hot Wax' article and more. Fortunately, there is no need to do this, as Mike collaborated with biographer Michael Madden



Mike Sanchez



to get his whole life-story written down in the book 'Big Town Playboy', so you can read about it there. The accompanying photo of Mike and I was taken at Hemsby on 2nd October 2015 when Mike autographed my copy of the book soon after its publication the previous year. More recently I raved about a couple of tracks Mike recorded with Ray Collins' Hot Club, especially the laid-back 'Right Here In My Arms'. These were issued on Ray's CD 'Intercontinental' which also includes Big Jay McNeely on



the currently popular club hit 'Funky Bug'.

One of Mike's CDs which I feel has not received due praise is 'You Better Dig It!' on Mike's own Doopin label, released in 2008 (see www.doopin.com). On this 19-track CD Mike actually demonstrates his mastery of a wide range of styles – not just rock 'n' roll. Rockers will enjoy especially the title track 'You Better Dig It' and also 'She Can Rock' which have full saxes in Little Richard's style. In fact, 'She Can Rock' was first recorded by Little

Ike, who was one of the many performers who jumped on the Little Richard band-wagon and recorded similar-sounding records in the 1950s in the hope of achieving similarly big sales. Mike even has a solid go at Little Richard's 'Heebie Jeebies'. But, just to emphasize the point I made at the start of this article, Mike turns in a very good version of Big Jay McNeely's sensitive ballad and 1959 hit 'There Is Something On Your Mind', which featured Little Sonny Warner on vocals. Mike also makes a good job of 'Bom Bom Lulu' from Gene & Eunice. Furthermore, on other numbers, such as 'Lipstick Traces', Mike moves on a few years into the New Orleans sounds that came after the rock 'n' roll of Fats Domino and others. These stylistically later numbers may move away from the remit of this mag, but they do continue to demonstrate Mike's talent and the skill of the arrangers. Now, we go back to recordings made in the 1950s and early 1960s for three CDs recently released by Jasmine Records who are doing such a good job of reissuing stuff from this era for us all to enjoy without paying the large sums required to purchase the original records. I'll have to be brief to fit them all in.

Let's start with Phil Flowers and his CD 'D.C. Rider – Washington Rhythm & Blues 1958-1962'. In many ways Phil was like Mike Sanchez. Phil could sound good over a wide range of styles. But, unlike Mike, Phil's producers sometimes let him down by failing to get the best out of the musicians and the sound best recorded onto tape. My favourite track by Phil Flowers, and the one I have enjoyed for many years, is 'No Kissin' At The Hop'. This is undoubtedly the best rocker on the CD, with great exaggerated vocals, but could use the saxes higher in the mix, and the guitar sounds tinny. It is worth bearing in mind that the cost of the CD is

lower than the price of a mint copy of this record. The CD also has a great photo of Phil on the front and very informative liner notes from Tony Rounce, who also did much good work on compilations for Ace Records.

The 25-track CD ranges from fast zagged rockers like 'You Stole My Heart' to the sax-led blues of 'What It Means To Be Blue' and the almost swamp pop sound of the fine 'Walkin' At Night' with superb sax. 'Lose' is a classy slow ballad. 'Devil Blues' has great saxes and flute on a spooky voodoo kick. 'No More Tossin' & Turnin'' is an answer to Bobby Lewis' hit 'Tossin' & Turnin' and sounds similar. Inevitably some of the later tracks recorded after all these are more light-weight and dance crazes start to feature as we move into the early 1960s. Phil Flowers was a vocal chameleon who could sound like lots of different people, which was both a strength for stage shows but a difficulty on record, as he was problematic to identify by ear. The various good tracks I have mentioned above should not be overlooked and will sound great on radio shows.

Like Phil Flowers, Frank Motley & His Motley Crew also made records in Washington D.C.. However, Frank and his various bands started recording a few years before Phil and were more consistently rockin'. In fact, on some of their records they get particularly wild and the sax-men and other musicians sound like they get carried away, often egged on by raucous vocals. If you like stompin' piano-men, extrovert rockin' sax-playin' and powerful driving records, Frank Motley and his Motley Crew are for you. Frank has had many records reissued over the years, starting with vinyl LPs released by Krazy Kat in the 1980s, then moving onto CDs ever since. The huge 16 CD deluxe box-set from Bear Family 'R 'n' B in DC –

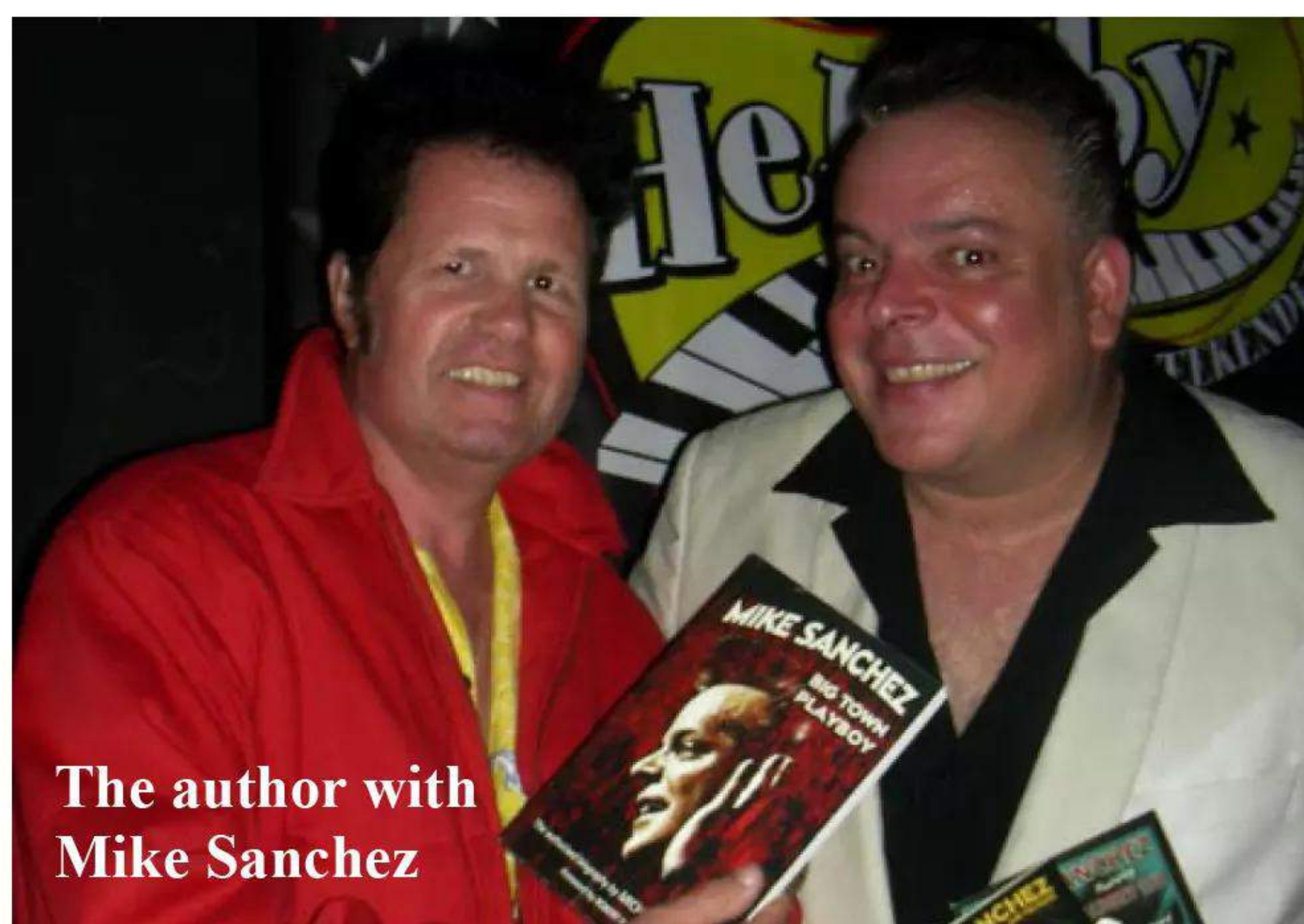


The Elegants

1940-1960' includes a lot of Frank Motley tracks, but as a mid-priced single CD the new Jasmine release has much to recommend it, especially if you are just starting out as a Frank Motley fan. I have to mention that Frank's star turn was playing two trumpets at once, but it is the sax-men that take a lot of the leads and breaks on the records. One of the finest, but also most way-

piano, and the fine blues ballads 'Don't Go' and 'What Can I Do' plus a measure of Latin on a few tracks. This band were clearly very exciting on stage and in the studio and some of the more frantic tracks tire you out just listening to them, let alone dancing to them!

I started this Hot Wax article with doo-wop sounds, and



The author with Mike Sanchez

out tracks is 'Honkin' At Midnight' which starts with a guy asking his girl where the band are 'honkin' at' that night, before they join the crazy honkin' party. It's a priceless capture of the more extreme part of the honkin' era, as is 'Diggin' In The Ground'. But many of the other tracks are more straightforward boogies and loose band blues, probably more palatable to some readers. 'Frankie & Johnny' really swings with honkin' sax to the fore. You can get blissfully lost in all these as one musician after another takes lively solos. There's also some cool vocals such as 'I Was Framed', loaded with sax and

that's how we are going to finish as well. This time it's The Elegants with their 21-track CD on Jasmine entitled 'Little Star' which was their biggest hit. It was released in the UK with 'Getting Dizzy' on the flipside, which is the second track on the CD. 'Little Star' is a gentle ballad and a classic of late 1950s white doo wop. No doubt it is familiar to many readers of this column. It is based on the nursery rhyme 'Twinkle, Twinkle, Little Star'. It was recorded for Hull records in 1958, sold 80,000 copies in New York alone in its first week of release, was then licensed to ABC-Paramount for national distribution, released on their

Apt subsidiary, promoted by Dick Clark and Alan Freed on radio and TV and sold over a million copies. All this is from the informative CD liner notes by Roger Dopson. 'Getting Dizzy' is an up-tempo rocker. I first got these two on a second-hand 45 when I was a school-boy.

Lead singer Vito Picone remembers that the group spent more than a year touring just about every state in the USA, making lots of money and having a good time. But they were only seventeen years old, with a manager who had little more experience than they. The next release, in October 1958, while 'Little Star' was still in the charts, was also on Apt, and was 'Please Believe Me', with 'Goodnight' on the flip-side. These are both strong doo-wop sides but did not become big hits. Vito, Roger and others consider that the group should have taken a break from touring to promote the new record on TV.

The Elegants continued to record good doo-wop throughout 1959 and 1960, initially back on Hull, then for United Artists who also had national promotion capability. There were no further hits, but that's certainly not because these later records are poor in any way, as listening to this CD proves. I commend Jasmine Records for releasing this quality CD. Fortunately, The Elegants became a popular act on the oldies/ rock 'n' roll revival concert circuit throughout the 1970s, 1980s, 1990s and into the 21st century, when I saw them a couple of times in the USA, sounding as good as ever. All the best until next month, with more Hot Wax from the last 75 years, all of which will be good, whenever it was recorded!

Paul 'Hot Wax' Waring

Unsung Heroes Of Rock'n'Roll



Hayden Thompson 'Love My Baby'

Born March 5th 1938
in Booneville /
Mississippi

A true Memphis Rockabilly cat, Hayden Thompson was one of the last to reap benefit of the Rockabilly Revival. He tried for years to make a name for himself, and his recording

debut pre-dates the one of Elvis Presley: Hayden Thompson and his Southern Melody Boys also made it to the Louisiana Hayride Show, evolving later in the Dixie Jazzlanders. Through most of 1956, they toured the movie theatres of Mississippi, playing sets between screenings of the Bill Haley movie "Rock Around The Clock".



Hayden Thompson then joined the Slim Rhodes Band, touring neighbourhood states, from their Memphis base. Sessions for Sun Records evolved into one single release on Phillips International – a cover of Junior Parker's "Love My Baby" – notably with The Killer Jerry Lee Lewis on piano, this song was backed with "One Broken Heart", a country / rockabilly ballad with a Latin beat. Other gems remained unreleased but would do wonders for Hayden Thompson's reputation when they finally saw the light of the day, during the Rockabilly Revival. Among them are "Rock-A-Billy Gal", "Blues, Blues, Blues" and "Fairlane Rock" – the song whose lyrics compare favourably a car's appearance to a girl's. In 1985, the song "Don't You Worry" was released on a Sun Records compilation credited to Sid Watson. It was Now Dig This Magazine's Trevor Cajiao who pointed the finger in the right direction, leading to the realization that the song is another one by Hayden Thompson.

Disillusioned to what his career had been so far, in the South, Hayden Thompson moved to Chicago, gigging at the Tally Ho club from 1958 to 1962, doing also lots of radio and TV shows while continuing to record. He returned back to Country

music for sessions in 1965, four of which an album resulted. He also tried his hands on contemporary Rock & Roll, cutting "Brown Eyed Handsome Man", inserting a twist verse into it, and singing about beach parties in "It Won't Be Long Until The Summer". He also cut "Queen Bee" around this time. Hayden Thompson's influences are notably Elvis Presley, Charlie Rich, Chuck Berry and Johnny Cash. In the 1970s he continued his career in music, but also worked as a cab and limousine driver, his first gigs in Europe came not to be until 1984. When the big mainstream felt Rockabilly Revival ebbed down already. While in London he recorded an album with Dave Travis, where he relived his glorious Rockabilly past with tremendous songs such as "Eenie Meenie Minnie" and "Ah, Poor Little Baby". Other newly and highly acclaimed albums followed on the Sunjay label of Sweden and Bluelight from Finland.

*Otto Martin
Fuchs*

Otto hosts the Rockabilly Rules OK Programme on www.rockabillyradio.net

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Kate Allvey has a chat with



Laura Palmer is the kind of frontwoman who knows how to turn heads. From the second the tall, magenta-haired Ameripolitan winner unfolds herself from her car in a quiet Soho street ahead of the second date of Screamin' Rebel Angels' whistlestop UK tour, she attracts the best kind of attention. Even as she shuffles her bass down the narrow stairs to the St Moritz

Club, Palmer is all smiles, her energy completely infectious.

"It's been great! I flew in, had a full day to rest, had a full day of rehearsals. We played in Maldon last night, it was super fun, and it's so great to be here. It's just such a great basement vibe, it kinda reminds me of dirty old New York..." Palmer gestures around the empty club as we chat. Gaz's Rockin Blues is a legendary club night, and the

venue is crammed with memorabilia and photos pinned to the stained wallpaper. Lemmy Kilmister's portrait in particular catches her eye. "He's looking over us! He loved rockabilly too," she laughs. "I really just want to play for crowds of sweaty people, that's all I want to do. Rock n Roll! I was here in 2018, right before we released 'Heelgrinder', and we had plans to come back in 2020,

and I just haven't been back since." The crowd across the pond hold a special place in Palmer's heart. "I just love the UK audiences. You get the spectrum of ages, and people that really love it and are into the lifestyle, and really appreciate the music. They're more familiar with it here, I think. We started playing the first song last night, and this guy in this crowd goes 'psycho! Yeah!'," she drops into an impression of an enthusiastic fan, "and I'm like, yeah! My people!" It was like this older gentleman too. I was just like, I love this, it's so great. And this other woman too, she was saying how she was in the sixties and seventies, and watching us play...she said 'it feels like I'm eighteen again!'. It was just the sweetest thing. I loved it. What I love about the UK audiences is the lifestyle, and the longevity, and there's this passion about it. When you see all of that, it just fuels you to keep going and to keep doing it. I love it. You're going to play for a little girl who's gonna come up to you, or someone who's a bit older, and it's inspiring both ways. I love it and I feed off it! I love the tours. I just love being able to spend a week or two weeks in another country, just meet people and you automatically have a connection with them, you have something in common. It's nice...it just fills me up, replaces what needs to be replenished. I can amplify it, give it back to everyone who's there. It's what I live off."

While Screamin Rebel Angels are definitely a rock n roll band, they defy further description. "We'll play with everybody, throughout their career," explains Palmer. "We've played with Nekromantix, and Reverend Horton Heat, but then also Dick Dale or Imelda May. It's been really cool. My sound is the culmination of all of my influences and everything that I love, reimagined into how it comes out. It's great in the way it doesn't fit into one

genre. I take elements from everything that I love. One one record I'll have like old French yeah-yeah influence, or traditional rockabilly, or psychobilly, or surf, or the Cramps, or a lot of old gospel. I haven't really figured out what our genre is. We have our own genre in there." Palmer's experiences are also a huge inspiration for her sound. "I feel like it was a path I kinda of drifted into, and when I got there I was like 'yes, these are my people, this is it, I love it'. I can trace it back to this lightbulb moment when I was nineteen years old. I'd grown up going to punk rock shows, like all ages shows hardcore shows and DIY shows...you know, like CBGBs matinee shows you can go to when you're a kid. I went out with my friend - she was a piercer, and her husband was like a handsome tattoo dude, a greaser - and she was like, 'oh, my husband's in a band, come and see us'. We go out, and we go to this basement in Long Island, and there's all these rockabilly bands playing. I was like..." She gasps, remembering her excitement. "It was this punk rock ethos, but all of these amazing people dancing together, and just the whole vibe of men and women together, it was just so...it was something I didn't know I was looking for. What's really amazing is I remember that band, they were called the Buzzards and they are still around, and I play bass for them now sometimes! I joke with drummer like 'hey, I met you when I was a teenager!' It was so funny how full circle it was. It's hilarious." This time period also informed Palmer's choice of instrument. "I started playing bass because we couldn't find a bass player. All our bass players lived outside being close enough to come rehearse with us in New York. Out of necessity I started playing it, and the two records



I was listening to non stop were the Go-Getters 'Hot Rod Rodeo' and Bellfuries...y'know, any Bellfuries I could get my hands on. And I didn't realise that, as much, until listening back to it: oh, this is what has informed my style. It's been really nice to have to opportunity to place bass for the Go-Getters a few times, all over, and I'm like 'yes!'" Her voice rises to a higher pitch in excitement. "I just love how much of a family and a community the rockabilly and the rockin' scene is, so I feel like our genre of music is always aligned there because I love the people so much. They're always so accepting."

The Screamin' Rebel Angels who will take to the stage a little later that evening might not be the lineup we were expecting. For the UK tour,

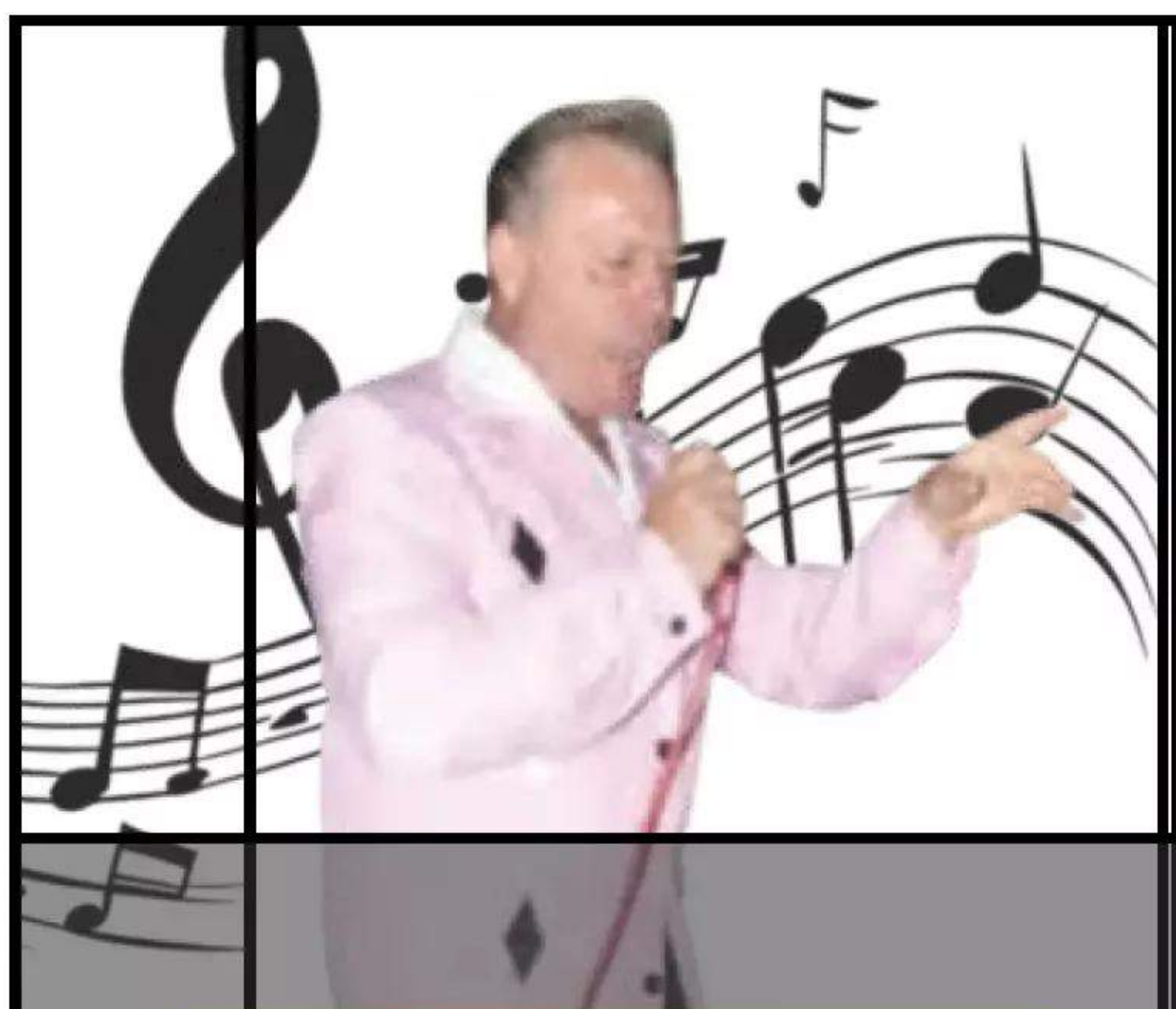
Palmer is backed by the legendary Lady Luck Lexy on drums, and Nick Bayford on guitar, but since the Screamin' Rebel Angels lineup is always evolving, bringing in two neo-rockin' favourites is more than welcome. "We started off as a three piece," Palmer remembers. "I started off as the guitar player, and me and the drummer started the band, then we got Yoni in on bass. We did some interviews, and some live performances, as a three piece, then we called in Brian, who played with me for like a decade, then that sound really, really came together, and then I moved to rhythm guitar. It was crazy! I had been a promoter beforehand, just like booking all the bands, and this was really my first real band. I had no idea of the things I wasn't supposed to do. So I was like 'yeah, I'm

making a record right now, yeah I'm going across the US right now, Europe- we're going.' I didn't know! I would just say yes and figure it out on the way. Then I just got better at it! Make a record a little bit better, book a tour a little bit better, do it in time and in tune! It's all a learning process, I love it."

From the moment Palmer's blues voices cracks the steamy basement atmosphere with 'Oh My Soul', it's clear that whatever configuration of Screamin' Rebel Angels are in front of us, we're in for a treat. 'When I'm With You' heaves with lo-fi slinkiness, it's presence so much bigger than the most underground of stages. "This is my first time being sweat on by the ceiling of a London basement!" Palmer laughs, before 'Baby Get Down's clipped, taut energy breaks with a wail and a roar, sliding into the classic neat and heavy bass stomp of 'Hard Headed Woman'. The 'little rhumba'

number, 'Where You At', is simple and heartfelt, direct and full of desire, its heart beating with primitive rhythm. Palmer's originals blend seamlessly with updates of the classics: 'Bumble Bee', dedicated to 'my favourite pollinators', is classy and direct, with a great call and response that dips and weaves into a sultry, confident reimagining of Vince Taylor's 'Brand New Cadillac', propelled forward by elegant bass swerves. The bluesy tone of the night is tempered by a light touch from Lexy and Bayford, adding a playful edge to highlight the ferocity of their updated 'Riot in Cell Block Number Nine's power stance, adding dimensions we couldn't anticipate.

The crowd at Gaz's Rocking Blues are, at first appearances, not the average rockin'



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audience: very young, and almost universally painfully fashionable. It's almost a test of the power of a band to win them over, and a window into how our favourites would have appeared when they played in bars seventy years ago. 'Red Hot' is the number that steals the crowd's hearts, and everyone on the dance floor lets out a whoop when 'Something On Your Mind' begins, relishing its gorgeous buildup and smooth romantic resignation through peaks and troughs, heights and pauses. The garage-scented, demo quality to their cover of Little Richard's 'Long Tall Sally' breathes new life into the original, and surely has converted more than a few to the rockin lifestyle by the time its over. A couple twirl so hard that one girl falls over, laughing gleefully. 'Out Of This World' feels as crisp and refreshing as a green apple held by a pinup in a creased, sun faded poster. They close out with 'Heelgrinder': it's a rip roaring, big power number that pops and roars through everything we love about the timeless sound, with a delicious relish in the dirtier end of the growls. It's also Palmer's favourite song to play live. "I love the energy on that song," she reveals. "We started closing with it. It's so great to see people singing and dancing along, it just revs people up."

Sadly not on the Soho Setlist is 2021's 'He's The One That Rings My Bell'. "We released that for when we played Viva Las Vegas, the half one," She's referring to the post-covid Viva Las Vegas which took place in September 2021. Palmer shared the stage with the legendary JD McPherson and the Delta Bombers. "It's a split 45 between Screamin Rebel Angels and Abby Girl [and the Real Deal]. It started out because the same band that was backing Abby Girl is my California-based band, so I thought that this'll be great. We got to the studio, everyone was doing their thing, and it was great, but it didn't click in



© Adam Malpas Photography 2024

my head when I was there, and we ran out of time. I was like 'dammit!' So we got home, and I was working on these other demos and stuff, and I just put this together, and I had these scratch tracks. I sent it out to a few friends, and they were like 'this sounds good'. It was such a relief, being able to sit there and have the time to not be constrained by studio time. That's also what I'm working

on, for all the new records and stuff. I keep changing instrumentations on everything! I'll have my favourite song I've ever written, and it'll go from like a twenty track instrumentation, down to three, down to two, and I just can't land on it! I should just release a record that's like that song, but all different versions!" She cackles.

"There's so much new stuff on the way! There's been a bit of a gap, because of Covid. Covid knocked me out. I was not in the best of health for a little bit, but everything's back into fighting shape [now], I've got the energy up. I've been writing a lot. I was in Portugal last year for a week with Boz Boorer, we were working on some new stuff then and ideas for other collaboration. The biggest thing is my instrumentation. When I'm at home I play a bunch of instruments, and I add in violin, piano...all the different basses and guitars, electronic stuff, and now I'm just filtering it down to see how it eventually comes out. I don't have a desire to rush out anything because I just enjoy the process of it. I just enjoy playing music. So, no rush to put it out to everyone, but I know people are anxious to hear it!"

If live rather than studio music is your jam, then you'll have plenty more chances next year if you missed out on the Screamin' Rebel Angels' brief UK stint. "I've confirmed, but not announced yet, several festivals, so I'll be back in Europe multiple times [next year]," the vocalist shares. "I have a few US coast to coast tours which are happening in October and February. I will release at least a single in time for our October tour. I don't know which one yet, I'm not sure, I have so many ideas that are all over! I just wanna encourage people to listen to new music, to hang out there and listen to live music, and give everybody a chance, and keep the love going, and the energy and the creativity!" With that in mind, we'll be counting the days until we get another shot at experiencing Screamin' Rebel Angels live.

*Laura Rebel
Angel was
chatting to
Kate Allvey*



Photo: Ruby Flashman

Nick Kemp has a chat with



Nick Whitfield

Nick Whitfield is a stalwart of the rockin' scene, as singer , bassist, guitarist and occasional drummer both in his own band The Drugstore Cowboys and as a go-to sideman for many other performers. Nick Kemp decided to get a bit of an insight into what makes Nick tick.

Gong right back,when and where were you born ?

Born 22nd March 1971 at home! 66 Narborough Road which is the main road into Leicester, above a jewellers at the time, now a kebab shop I believe..

Can you tell me about your musical upbringing?

My parents were not musical at all, never even had much of a record collection! I can only be envious when hear that people I speak with had anything from Buck Owens to Chuck Berry to Glen Campbell in their parents' collection, that said' my father bought the Elvis 40 Golden greats' on Arcade for my mother just after Elvis died. That album would open with 'My Baby Left Me' so that's gotta be the first time I heard a Slapped bass and all the other magic of that song, still a top 20 song to this day. However, my older brother was a huge influence, we're

both still heavily into similar music. So I was following my older brother who was following his older friend who would've been old enough to witness the 70/80's Rockabilly revival and he'd pass down the records for us to soak up.

My parents moved later from my birthplace and we moved across town and were literally living a stones throw away from a legendary rock'n'roll club called the T.U.L club, so this would be 1978/9 and I would be an 8 year old riding by the club on my bicycle and seeing Teddyboys outside the club smoking and talking and I was curious I guess. Quite a few original 50's artists and 70's bands would

play the T.U.L but me and my brother weren't old enough to attend, they also did a Sunday afternoon record hop and that's where our parents would allow us to have our first rock'n'roll experience, taking in the clothes, music and dancing.

To name just a few I can recall hearing 'Jungle Rock' 'How low can you feel' 'Let there be drums' 'Reet petite' etc etc.

What were the first records you owned?

If I'm brutally honest I'll answer that question 'What was the very first 45 you owned?' I must have been a confused 7 year-old as it was 5705 by 'City Boy' no reason other than it was on the counter at the local supermarket!

So I can't really remember after that but I do remember Christmas 1981 and our parents allowing myself and my brother two LPs each, these four albums were the Jets , the Bluecats, the Polecats and the Meteors first albums, exciting times!

Was Shakin stevens your way into rockabilly?

Ha! Well I would've been a 9 year old attending school discos when 'This Ole House' entered the charts so would've definitely been in there having a bop for sure!

I quite liked his last 'Need for Greed' single actually and then there's the legendary TV 'headlock' incident with Richard Madely that I'll always respect him for!

What came first, your love of rockabilly or psychobilly?

So. I was fortunate to hear the rock'n'roll standards and rockabilly stuff at the crazy ripe old age of 7!

It would be another year or more before I'd start hearing the full force of the 80's revival and the bands who had their success. Seeing 'Runaway Boys' on TOTP was a huge impact! You've



got to consider we weren't old enough to see any of the British bands before the Stray Cats arrived and hit the airwaves and tv screens. My brother brought the 'Meteors' first EP home and that was a game changer, shortly followed by the 'In Heaven' album arriving Christmas 1981 everything changed.

So, I went through all those styles of the music, loved the early psychobilly and the garage/trash sounds of the Stingrays, Vibes, Milkshakes, the mid to late 80's neo rockabilly bands were refreshing too. I would then go backwards a little and seek out more of the original sounds and seek out more of the rarities, blues and country and more etc. I still love all the aforementioned but some things travel better than others!

Which were the first bands that you saw?

My parents would drag me to the local working men's clubs as a youngster so I'd see my first bands, 60/70's cover bands, there was a Leicester band called 'Warlock' who

would knock out some rockabilly and rock'n'roll whilst I rustled through my 'Lucky Bag'.

Then my first real gig was an absolute banger, The Cramps and the Stingrays at Leicester's Demontfort Hall in 1985, the Guana Batz were billed too but didn't play that night. Underage I remember being tossed around like a rag doll as I dived into the action. Another one would be the 8th Powerhouse All-dayer hosted by legend 'Colin Silcocks'. Mac Curtis would headline backed by the Hayriders who in later years I would play bass for!

And at what stage did you begin to play music?

It would be around the age of 15 or so, again my older brother Chris would bring a guitar into the house, shortly followed by a double bass too, he didn't take to it and I'd end up picking them up and playing around, I was also dabbling with drums and had a makeshift kit made from biscuit tins and packing tape!

What was your first band?

I had a secondary school band called 'The Gangsters' a rockabilly, a metallor, a goth and two U2 fans, I played guitar, I would write two originals 'Mildred's got a new hat' and another that resembled a Krewmen song. A cover of the Sonics Strychnine, the Clash 'Should I stay or should I go' and Wipe out' and we were ready to do my/our first gig in the assembly hall at Wycliffe school. I'm very happy to have footage of this on YouTube 'Gangsters Wycliffe' if anyone is curious?

I think that I first saw you play around 97/8 at a psychobilly all-day in Leicester at the Charlotte, I think that it was headlined by Batmobile. Can you tell me a bit about your fondness for psychobilly?

I'm not so big on psychobilly these days to be honest, 'In Heaven' is the album of the genre for me and I still play it regularly, I get a bit tired of the debate that is the origination of psychobilly, whilst they might have used

the word loosely the Cramps are the Cramps! An amazing separate entity...

Psychobilly became unconvincing to me mid to late 80's, like 'Punk' was short lived for me, it'd had its time.

I like some of the bands within the genre but I wouldn't really call them psychobilly these days, for instance the Guana Batz or Batmobile are hard edged whatever..

But you have over the years become more associated with rockabilly, could you tell me about some of the bands you have played with, I suppose most notably with John Lewis and Mike Sanchez, but also the Hayriders, Go-getters and any others?

That's a big question! How many pages we have?

So from my school band I would get into my first gigging/recording band drumming for The Hellkatz 1986-88, I would get my first release on a 'Fury Records' compilation with this band, then it was onto the very neo rockabilly sounding band 'The Cellmates' who released an album on Rage Records in 1990, I left the Cellmates in 1991 as I was a frustrated drummer writing songs and wanted to apply myself to guitar and double bass. From there to playing bass with the Hayriders, there was only a handful of gigs over a year or so, then I did various local blues bands and put out a few solo recordings as 'Slim Whitfield' before forming the Drugstore Cowboys in 1996. It was a different sound back then to now, not a hint of country on the first album 'Crash & Burn' The band evolved as I was soaking up so much more rootsy sounds for want of a better term..

Then maybe 6 months with Paul Ansells No.9 and a little stint and tour with 'Sslim Jim Phantom' and Darrel Higham takes me to 2006 when I joined Mike Sanchez, I met



with Mike at a Chris Izaak gig and I gave him my credentials as his bassist Al Gare was leaving the band to concentrate on Imelda May as she was taking off in a big way. Mike rang me a few weeks later and my first gig was at the 100 club a week or so later, he was happy so I could say that was the point I turned professional and gave up my full time job and enjoyed the most part of 16 years of being a pro musician. I owe so much to Mike, I got to travel extensively and got to back up and play with some big guns such as Young Jessie, Big Jay McNeely, Jeff Beck and Robert Plant.

I assume that you do this full time now so when did you turn professional?

I'm probably what you'd call semi professional now, collectively I'm still playing in a lot of bands but I don't compromise myself musically and take a gig just to earn a few quid, I'd rather drive a truck and I do that some days. Double bass has always been the bulk of my bands/gigs but I'm recently enjoying more

guitar work with the likes of the Go-getters, Mike Byrne and more recently a decent 'Cash' tribute with whom I play my next gig in Dubai of all places!

What are your top five albums of all time?

Now that's super tough to answer! I'll just give you five favourites ok? Ok I'd have to put in a Paladins album, a favourite band for sure, maybe 'Years Since Yesterday' as I heard that first. I'll put in the aforementioned Meteors 'In Heaven' as a childhood game changer. I'm a big Steve Earle fan so any of his later recordings let's say 'I feel alright'. I'll stick in the Deadbeats 'On Tar Beach' as there's just so much going on with that album, super cool. I'll finish with Gene Vincent's first and Second album as there's a story to that, I recently inherited the original British pressings from a good friend who's father had passed away, a big music lover, I donated to his favourite charity, the least I could do!

You famously recorded the bass for a 7" John Lewis release in the bathroom of your house, do you have a recording set up at home?

Ha! Yes different rooms have different acoustics! I have a spare bedroom that is my music room, it's my happy place. Everything I need is in that room, I don't actually have a recording studio set up these days but I demo things on my Iphone, the microphones on those things have come a long way! Over lockdown there was a bunch of us creating music videos on the 'Acapella' phone app, myself, Sam French and Willy Briggs amongst others were keeping sane creating these videos over the strange time that was lockdown.

What is your current band line up?

For many years the band has been like a Drugstore Mafia! It's basically myself and a small bunch of great players I can call on, most of em professional musicians so it goes with the territory that

they are involved with other things sometimes.

The super talented 'Sam French' is doing the bulk of Bass playing these days, I have some great stand in drummers when Damon Clarridge isn't available, I even have a Scottish rhythm section in Dc Amero and Sy McBass, I call em my McCowboys.

Is there a new Drugstore Cowboys album in the offing?

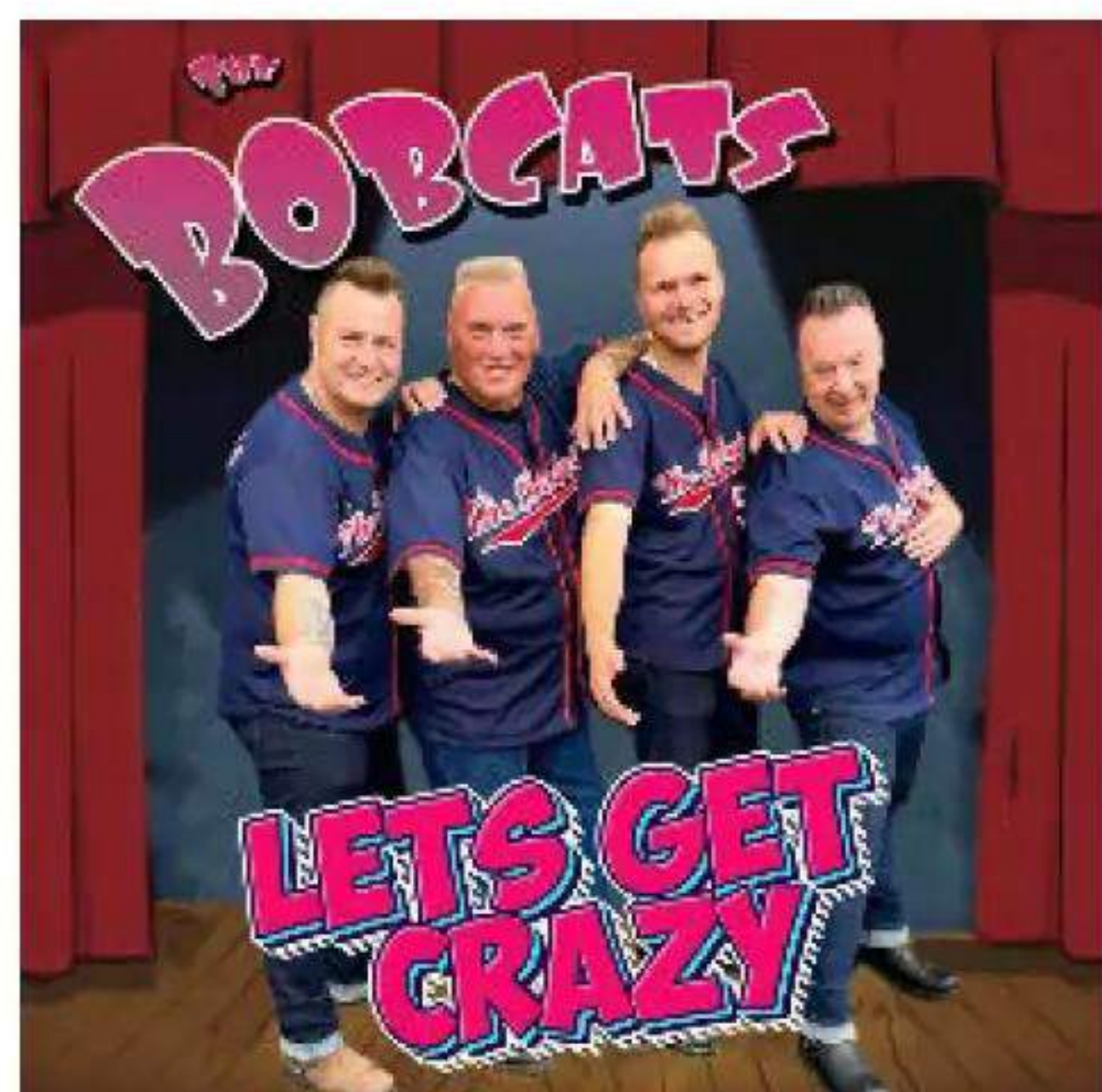
I've recently been into the studio and recorded a few solo tracks that will prob make the next album, I usually do a few solo songs as I'm able to do so. I certainly have enough songs for a new album, an album has to sound different from the last so I do one every ten years! I hope to make this happen over the next year, I prefer to self release under my 'Smokin Records' label but it's a big outlay these days as hard copy sales are less with how things have changed with digital distribution taking over.

What are your favourite countries to play and why?

I'd have to say I've had better experiences in Europe in general, promoters and venues really know how to treat musicians, hospitality goes a long way and it's so different to the UK, too many to mention but to name just a few highlights would be Nasty Boys Saloon in Italy, Sjock fest in Belgium, Hanger fest in Switzerland etc etc, that said' probably my favourite gig would have to be the little ole Donkey Venue/Bar in my hometown, so many great nights and good times there. Sadly the grass roots venues are closing one by one, use em or lose em!

*Nick Whitfield
was chatting to
Nick Kemp*

Waxworks!



The Bobcats

Lets Get Crazy

Long-running band The Bobcats mix rock'n'roll, rockabilly, doo wop, and jive, and with their energetic performances, they have rightfully earned their place among the foremost performers on the music circuit, captivating audiences both in the UK and on international stages for many years. 'Lets Get Crazy' is the latest CD from Darren Shaw and the guys and well worth a listen.

Opener Zimmer Frame Boogie is an original track to open the album and what a track it is. High octane stuff from the boys. A fun look at how we are all ageing and will soon be boppin with a Zimmer frame, great lyrics and vocals.

I Beg of You was first released by Elvis in 1957 and was used as the flipside to "Don't". The boys open the track with a fast beat drum roll before the opening backing vocals kick in with its Bom Bom. The fellas do a real good job keeping a close vibe to the original. A great cover.

Mostest Girl is a superb cover of the 1958 smash hit, the band using its doo wop style opening just like the previous song. There's a stuttering vocal in places that brings this track to the very own style,

great to hear the bass thrashing away very energetically. I love the ending with its Jordanaires style deep voice to a fade out.

Johnny Cash's Folsom Prison is one of the most famous tracks to come out of Memphis and that Sun sound that only Mr Phillips could create. This keeps very close to the original which is always the best way for this track.

Cherokee Boogie tells the story of young love between a young Cherokee lady and a mans journey through life's ups and downs, an awesome version of this country line dancing track that's now become a rocking favourite and the boys do a mighty fine cover, it's a floor filler.

7 Nights To Rock is a track which was recorded by Moon Mullican and is given the bands very own touch, some nice guitar riffs on this belter of a track. Vocals are clear and raw, turning it to a medley with Gone Gone Gone being thrown in for good measure.

Personal Jesus is a Depeche Mode track that when I first heard this track back in 89, not in my wildest dreams did I expect this to become a rock'n'roll track. mainly used by psychobilly bands but becoming more widespread within the rock'n'roll scene, the Bobcats give a great rendition and Darren's vocal really suiting the track with his deep tone.

Let 's Get Crazy is a fast paced bop and jive Rockin track.

Stray Cat Strut needs little introduction, it really can't be changed that much in sound, but can be formatted to bring it forward in time, and yes you

guessed it the boys have done that both vocally and musically.

Rockabilly Boogie is a classic rockabilly track which combines a mixture of genres to form this dance floor classic, the boys give a great cover of this all-time favourite.

I'm On Fire is my favourite track on the album. Its raw, its beaty, its wild, its rock'n'roll. Some sublime guitar and slap bass tagged with a rockin' drum background. The boys are definitely on fire.

Matchbox was recorded way back in 1956 and released by its writer Mr Carl Perkins in 1957 and this track that will rock your socks off. Turn the volume up and let that body go crazy once again.

Graveyard is a really good track with great lyrics and a Rockin tune. Not sure it fits with the album because of having more of a Halloween vibe, but nevertheless a great track

Freight Train Boogie was first released in the mid-1940s by the Delmore brothers and the

boys don't let up that fast-paced Rockin sound. A truly great cover of this country track

Rockabilly Rebel is one of the best known rockabilly tracks on the scene and now the most underplayed on the scene today. I can't think of a better track to finish the album on, the boys take us back to the days when we could bop, jive and wail before the zimmer frame boogie kicked it.

The Bobcats have been around the block and know what the rockin audience want and from the stage to the recording studio they have brought the dance hall to our homes. 15 awesome tracks which contain some brand new original releases that are performed to the highest quality. It's a collection you will play time and time again. Well done boys. Recommendation For sure, could not praise it enough, don't just buy it, go and see them and buy it.

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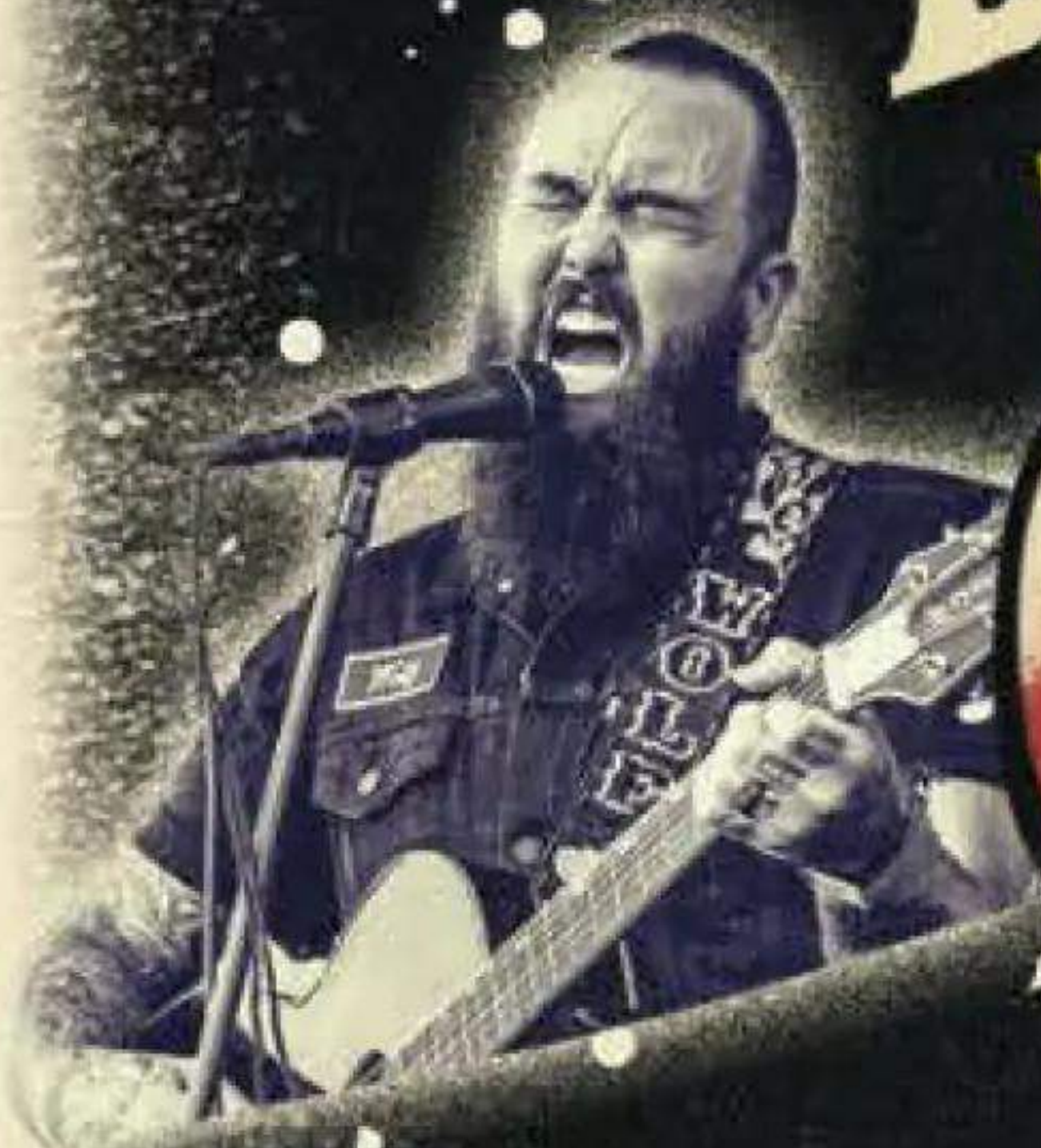


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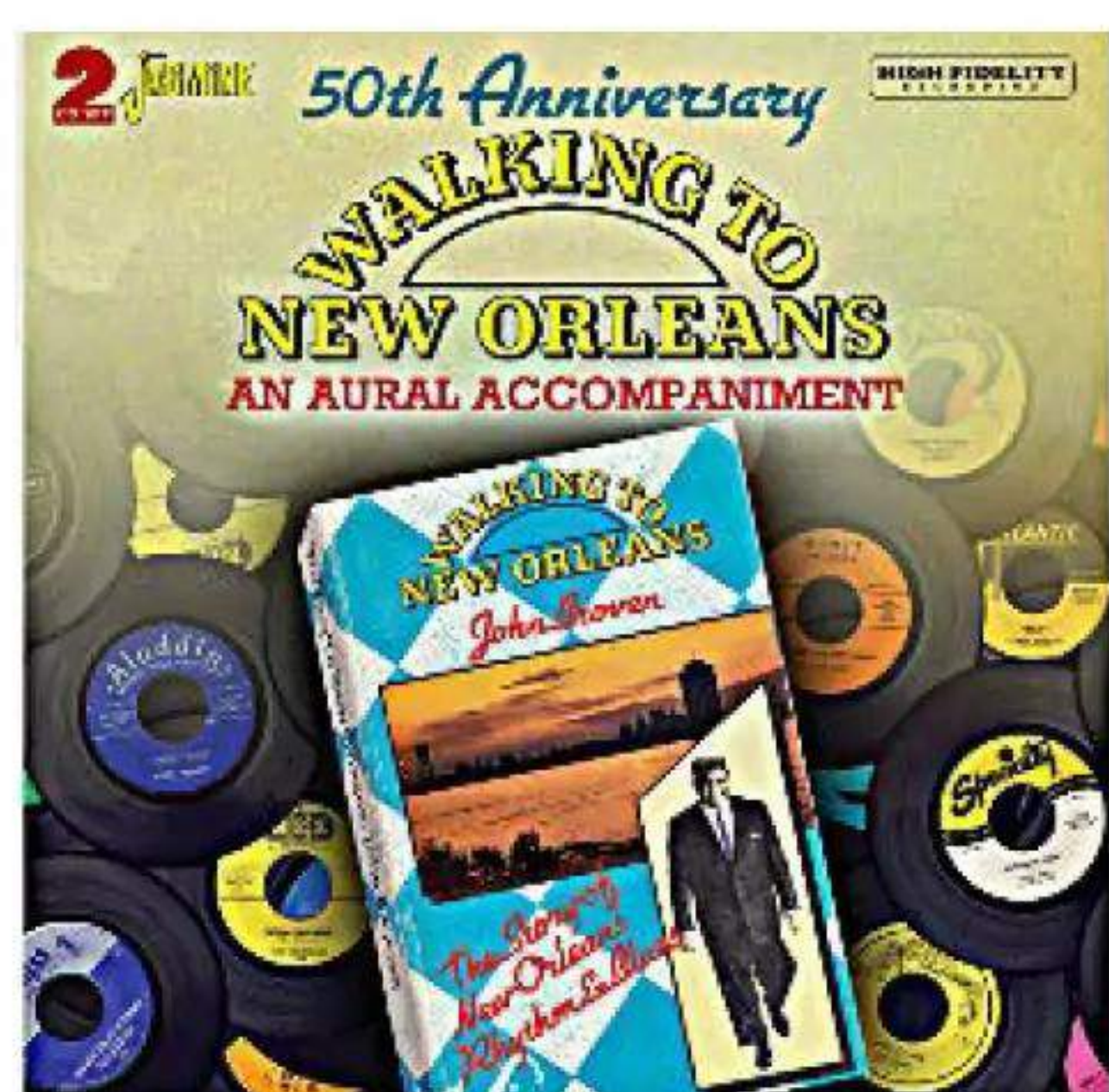
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Various Artists Walking to New Orleans - The 50th Anniversary Collection Jasmine

Fifty years after John Broven published the critically acclaimed book *Walking to New Orleans*, sub-titled *The Story of New Orleans Rhythm 'n' Blues*, he has compiled a double CD to listen to alongside it. The affable author, now 80, could not be accused of rushing things.

He could not fail to open the collection with the Fats Domino cut that gave the book its title, but from there on, stand by to be surprised at John's deep dive into some great rock'n'roll which will be less familiar.

The book was, in Broven's own words: "An original study of New Orleans R&B, chronicling the exciting rise and dramatic fall of the city's R&B era, from the 1940s through the 1960s, focusing mainly on the artists' history, on records. The story is enhanced by first-hand interviews with many of the leading exponents of the local music scene, including musicians, producers, songwriters, disc jockeys, jukebox operators, and studio and record-label owners." So the CDs are not a typical "New Orleans' Greatest Hits" set, as there are already plenty on the market, but largely a collection of less readily known recordings by the featured artists.

Ear-grabbing examples include Lloyd Price's excellent *Mailman Blues*, Papa Lightfoot's rollicking *Wine Women and Whiskey*, and Paul Gayten's catchy *The Music Goes Round and Round*.

There's similar wonderful choices from Irma Thomas, Shirley and Lee and Smiley Lewis.

Broven's contribution to the genre has been widely, and pleasingly, recognised on both sides of the Atlantic and it couldn't happen to a nicer bloke. As to whether his book changed any lives, I've been back to New Orleans on 16 occasions, and it all started with John's interview with Charlie Gillett on BBC Radio London's *Honky Tonk* back in 1974 and the trips organised off the back of the show.

John Howard



Duane Eddy The Jasmine EP Collection Jasmine

The late Duane Eddy was the first solo guitar star of the rock'n'roll era, producing million selling albums, touring the world and even appearing in movies.

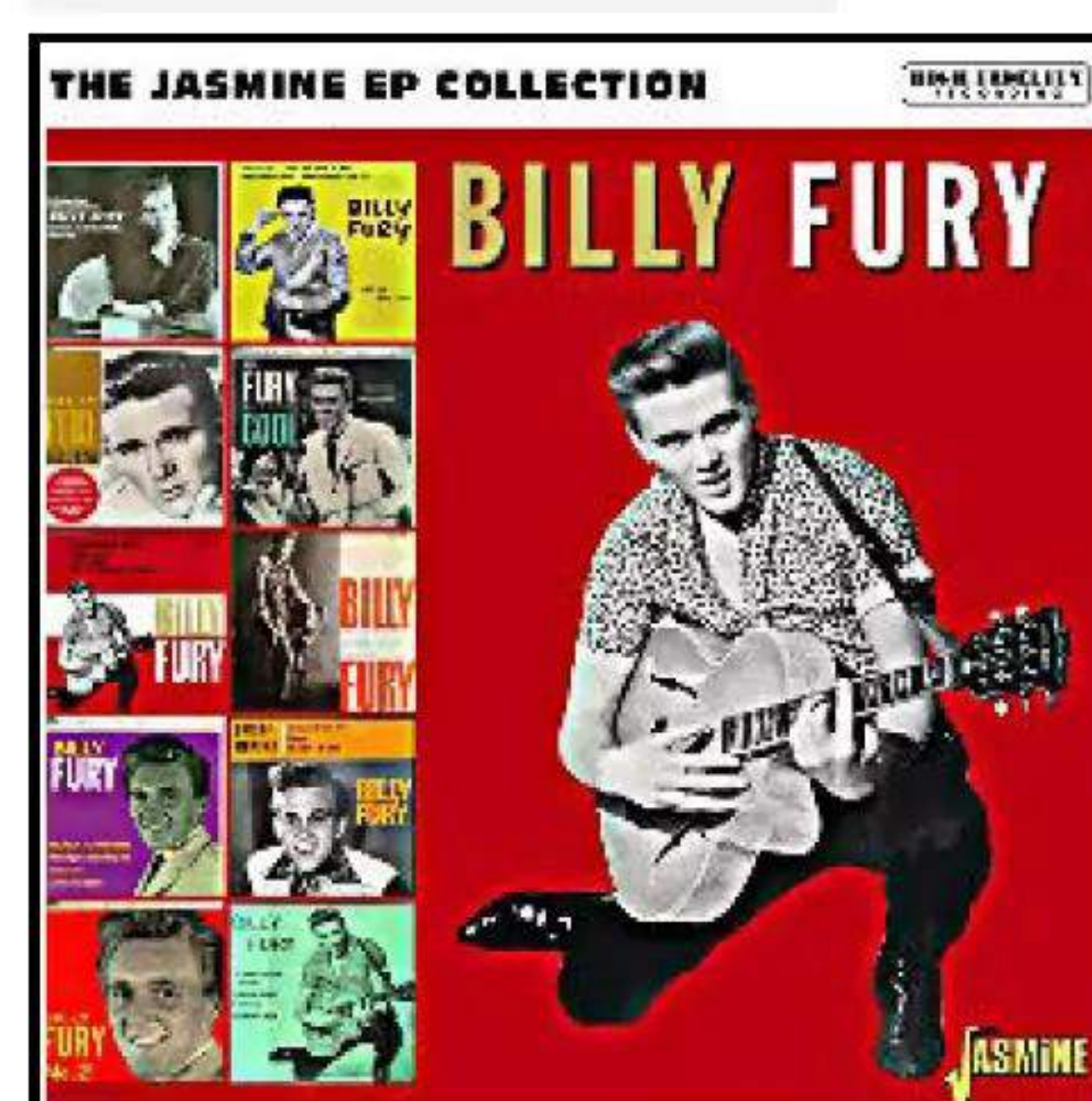
He introduced a new sound to R&R by plucking dramatic, single-string lead melodies on lower, bass strings, and making use of the then new whammy bar. And with his echo-drenched 45rpms, with their signature saxes and whooping rebel yells, Duane was innovative and his career was long lasting. This compilation of classic Duane tracks is drawn from EPs issued in the US, the UK, West Germany, France and Sweden between 1958-62.

Moovin' 'n' Groovin', *The Lonely One* and *Cannon Ball* are among the early 45s, but there's no *Rebel Rouser*, *Peter Funn* or *40 Miles of Bad Road* since they were never on EP, but

Eddy collectors will have those dozens of time.

So the inclusion of otherwise LP tracks like *Tiger Love* and *Turnip Greens*, *Theme for Moon Children* and the bouncy *My Blue Heaven* will make this a must have for casual fans of the now sadly silenced Twangy Guitar.

John Howard



Billy Fury - The Jasmine EP Collection Jasmine

When it came to re-naming Liverpool airport, pop singer John Lennon won the accolade. For rock'n'roll fans, it should have been Billy Fury who was honoured.

Like Johnnie Ray before him, Billy arrived fully formed, writing and performing his own excellent songs, but was side-tracked by tin-eared A&R departments who pushed him in the direction of cover versions of US hits.

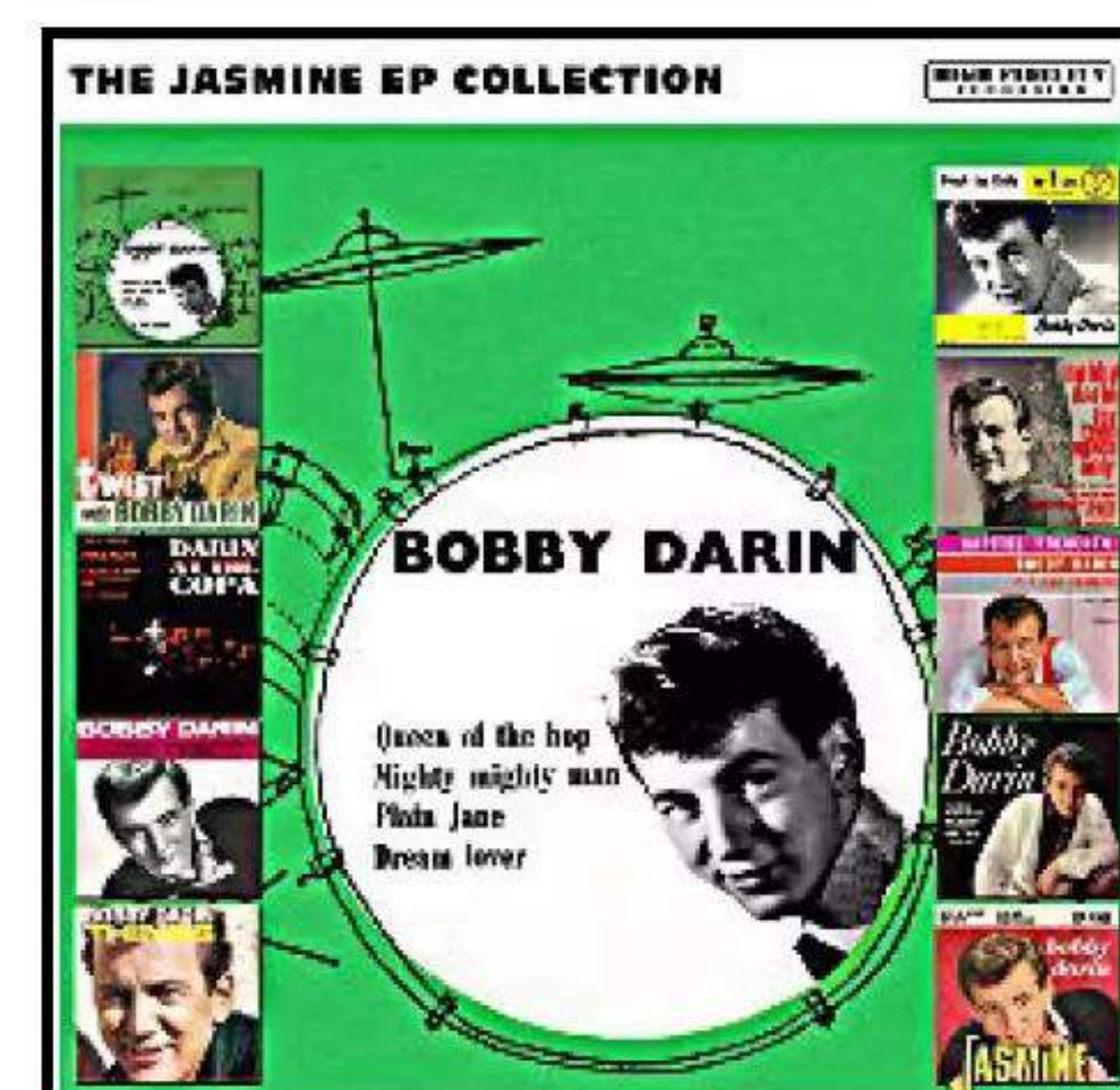
Still, he was one of the biggest home-grown stars of the pre-Beatles era, and by far the outstanding British Rock'n'Roller.

This compilation of killer Fury cuts is drawn from eleven EPs, issued in the UK, France and Spain. *Margo*, *Maybe Tomorrow* and *Gonna Type a Letter to You* are among the early superlative originals, and if anyone wrote and performed a better ballad than *Alright Goodbye*, I'd like to hear about it.

Among the later covers, Billy's *Wondrous Place* leaves the original by US Jimmy Jones in the dust, and *A Thousand Stars*,

Halfway to Paradise, and *I Love How You Love Me* are at least as good as Kathy Young and the Innocents, Tony Orlando and The Paris Sisters US hit versions.

John Howard



Bobby Darin The Jasmine EP Collection Jasmine

The short-lived crooner who went from the novelty rock'n'roll of *Splish Splash* to the swing influenced *Mack the Knife* and *Beyond the Sea* via movie stardom had his career encapsulated by the EP configuration, which involved four tracks in a glossy sleeve in the 7inch 45rpm format.

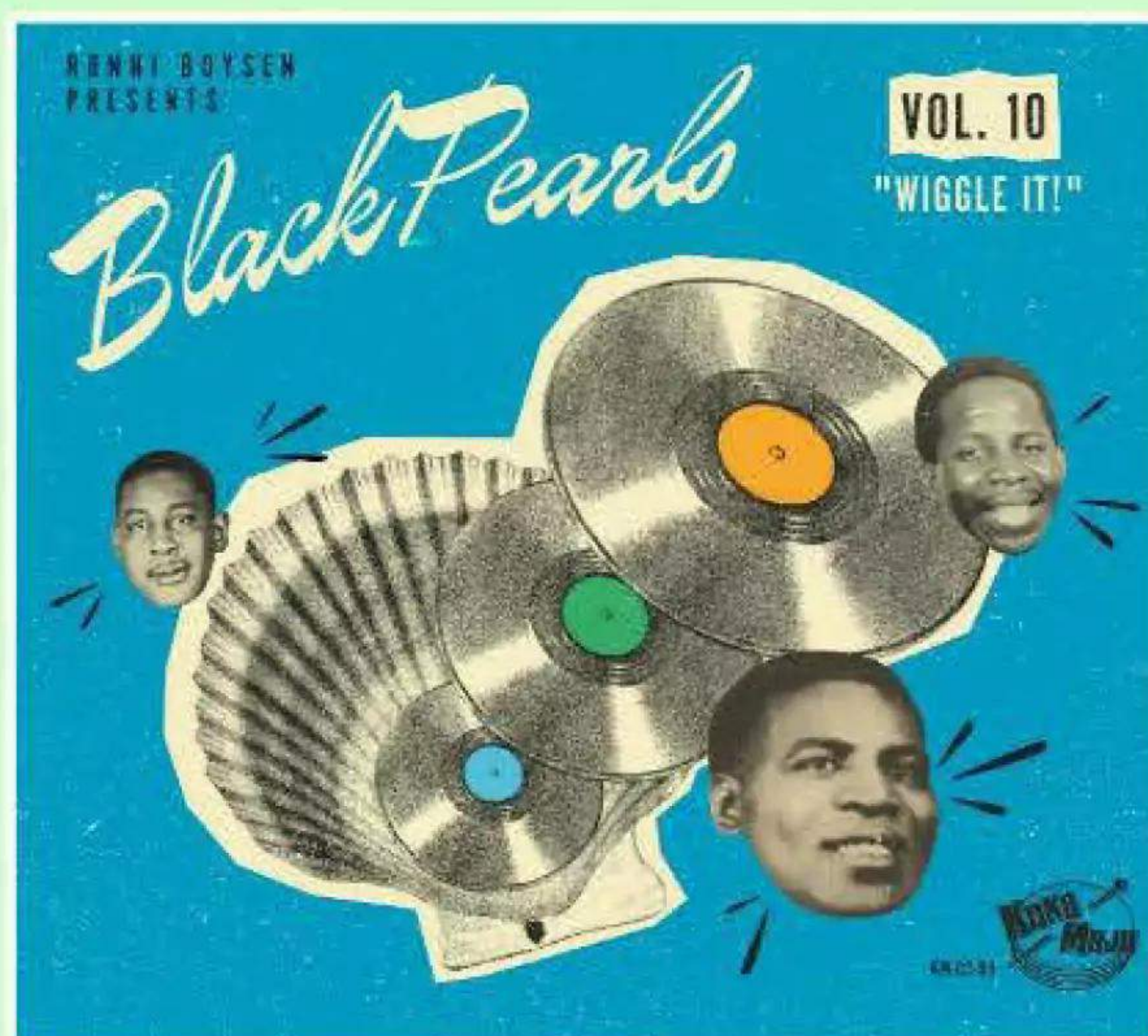
This generous 33 tracker opens with his pre-hit but interesting releases *I Found a Million Dollar Baby* and his own compositions like *Don't Call My Name* before the million-selling *Splish Splash* not only sold a million, but was so silly it attracted a UK cover by comic Charlie Drake.

Solid rockers like *Queen of the Hop*, *Bullmoose* and *Oo-EE Train* are the real deal, with Bobby's fine voice and compositional abilities turning him into a world star before his untimely death at 37.

Big hits like *Things*, *Multiplication* and *Lazy River* are here, with some lesser known but consistently well-written and well produced LP tracks and flip sides. Most interesting for me was the unfamiliar final track, credited here as *The Sermon of Samson*, but perhaps better known as *Tear This Building Down*, which had Bobby trying his hand at gospel, and making a good fist of it. If

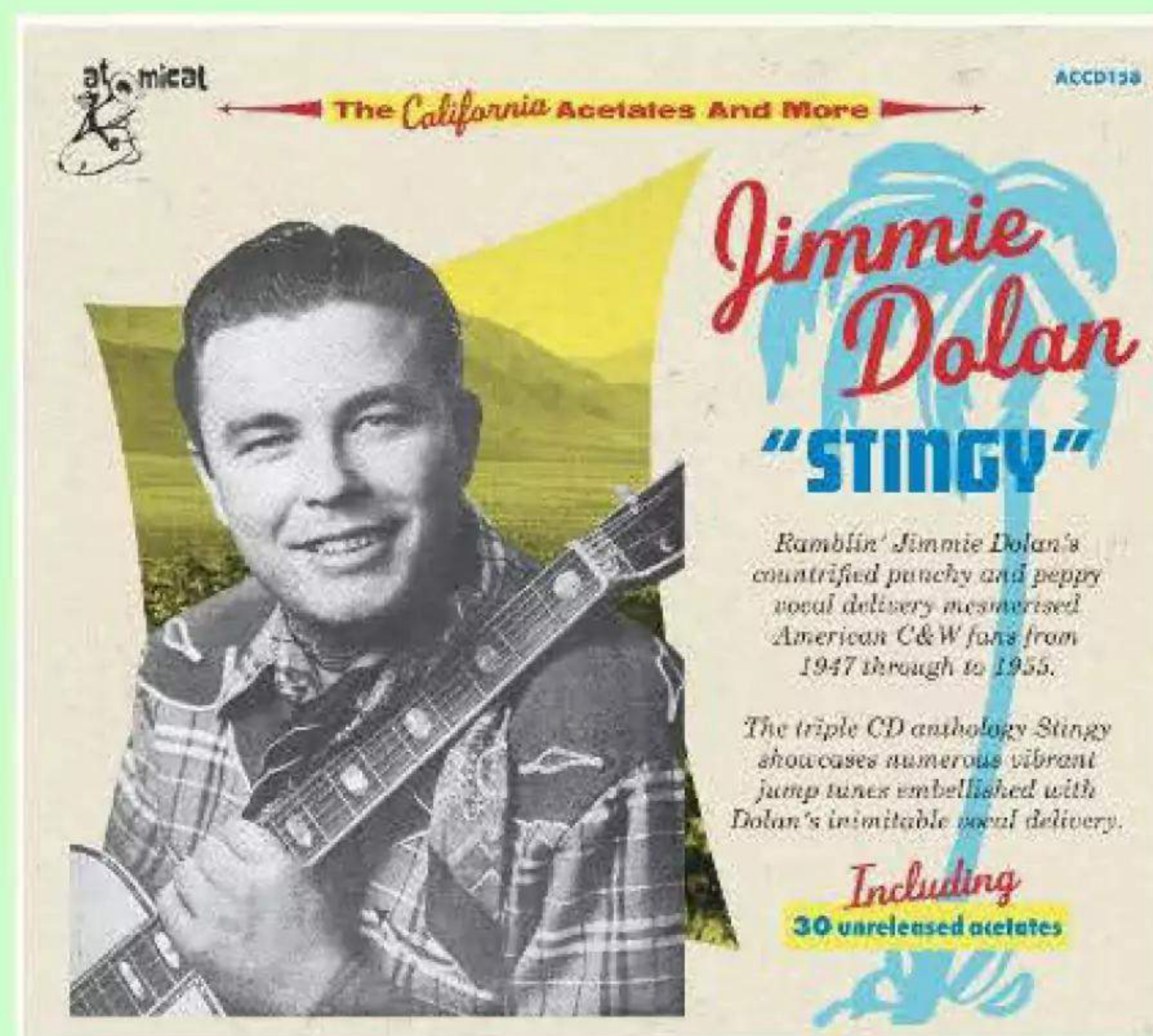
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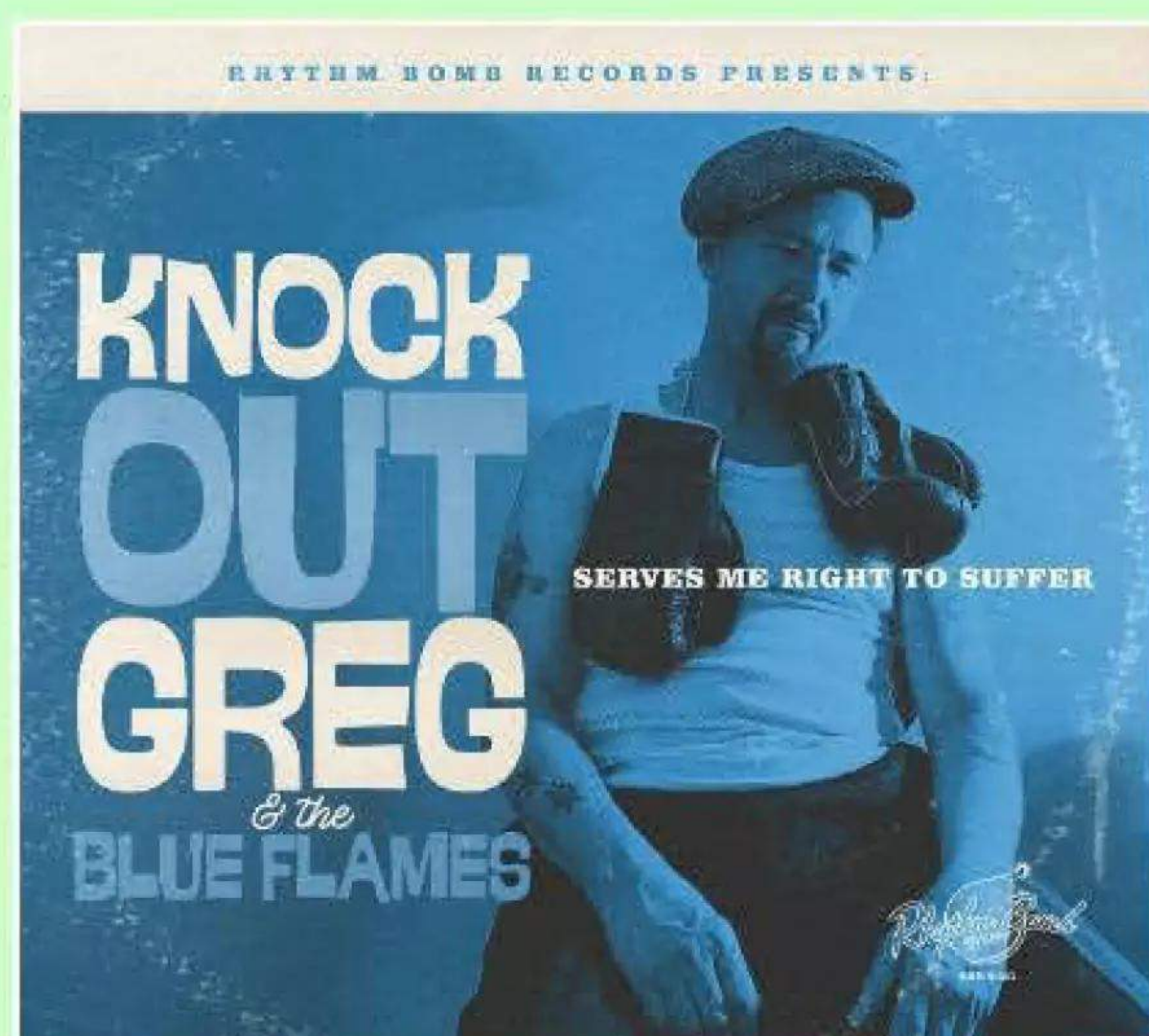
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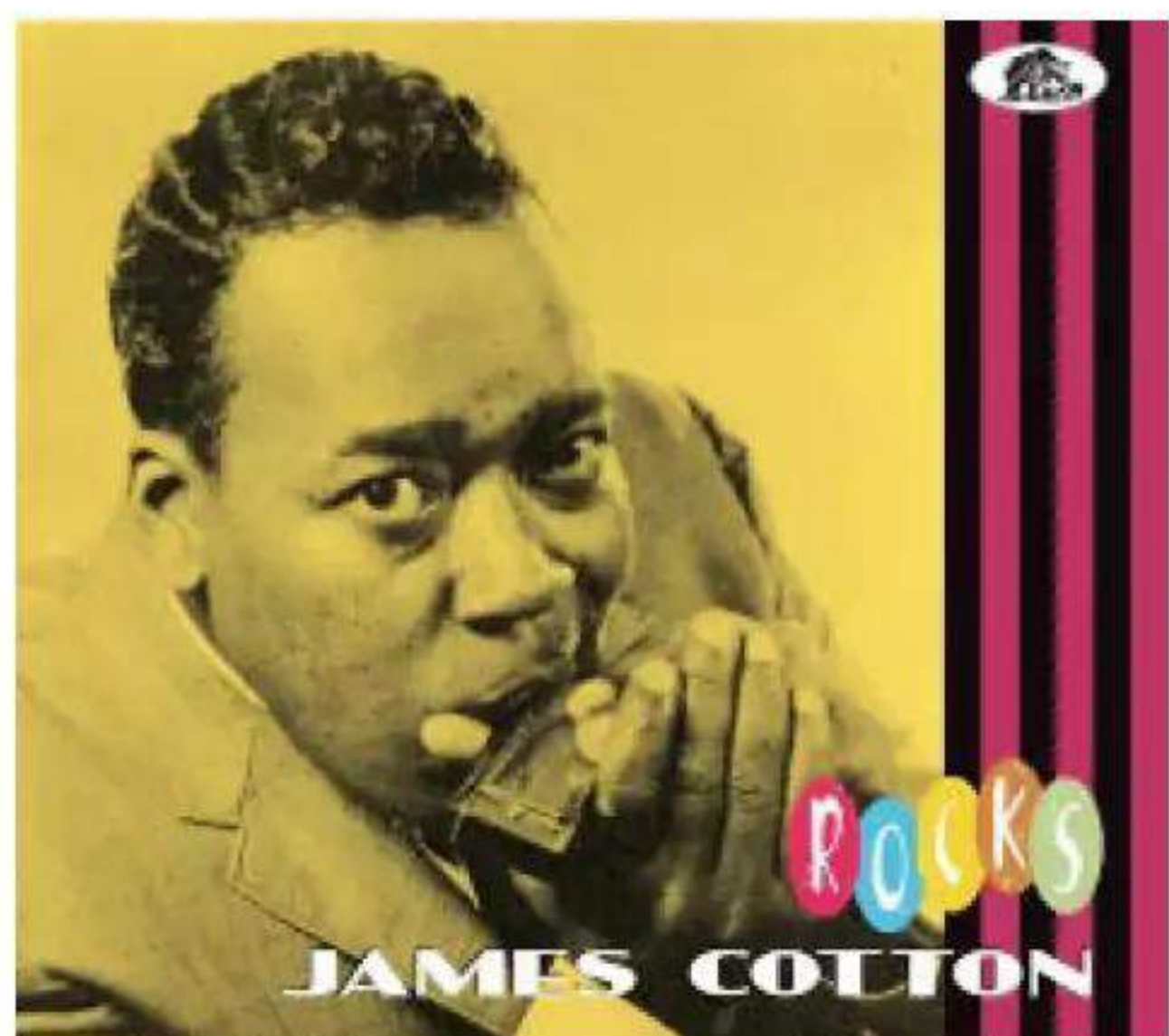
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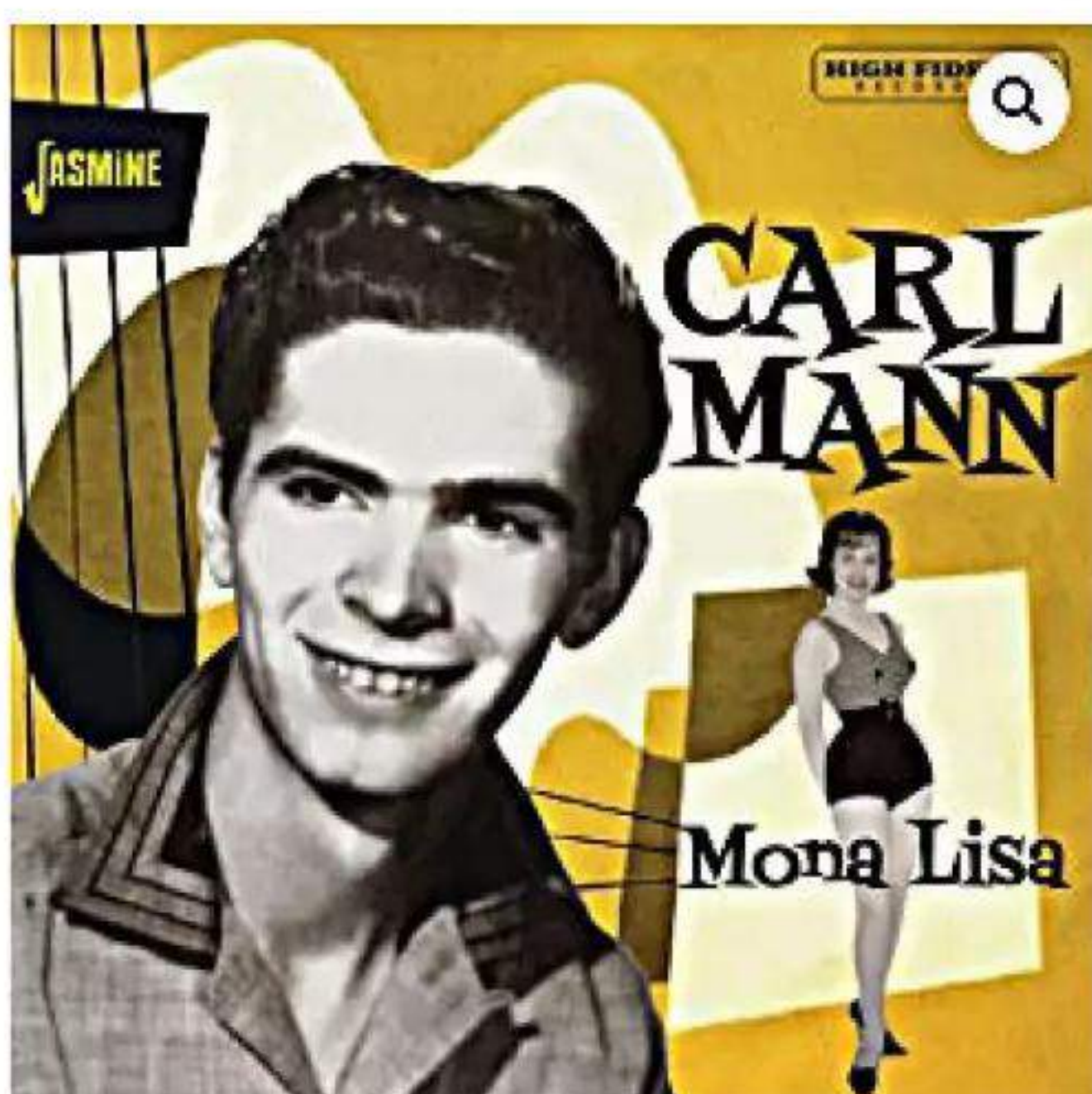
John Howard



James Cotton Rocks Bear Family

27 tracks from one of those artists who was there before it started, was there during, and long after it was over commercially. Rock N Roll that is, he was also a fine exponent of it and is another worthy addition to this ever-expanding series of legends. This collection spans 1953 to 1968 and includes Jame's very first recordings for Sun Records though much of it is taken from the late 1960's period during after he'd been working for Muddy Waters. Nine of these feature Waters himself on vocals while James does his thing on that legendary harp. These tracks show a maturity and of course are a showcase for the versatility of the harmonica in rock n roll.

Simon Nott



Carl Mann Mona Lisa Jasmine

Carl Mann was just 16 when his debut hit which gives this 33 track compilation its title hit the charts, despite the initial opposition of

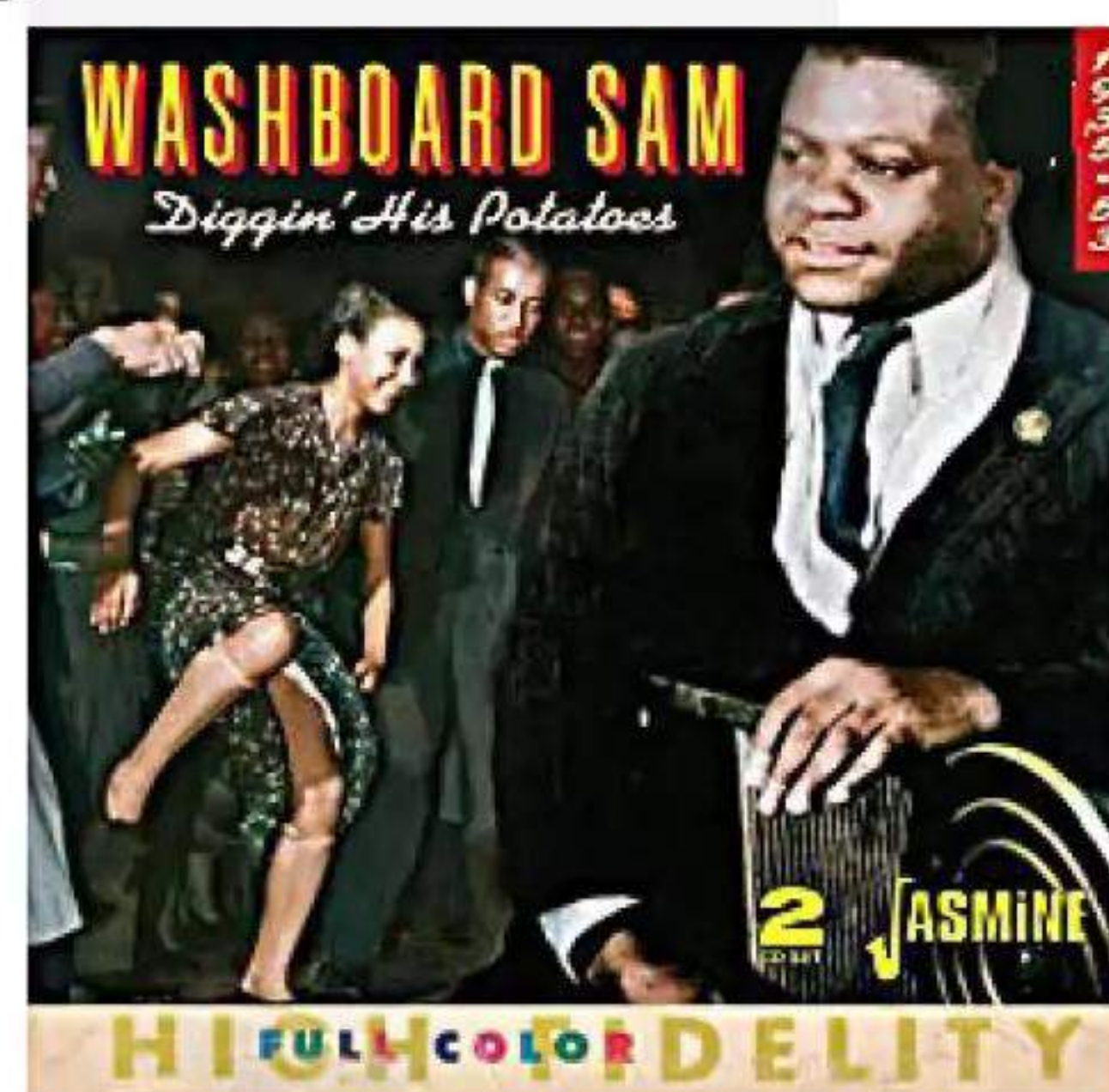
Sun label head honcho Sam Phillips.

Mona Lisa had been a ballad hit for Nat King Cole when Carl rocked it up a bit but Sam was unsure whether to release it until Conway Twitty paid a friendly visit to 706 Union Avenue, and spotted it.

Conway decided to record it himself, which led to Carl's belated release and a chart race between the two. Meanwhile rock'n'roll fans who bought the release, flipped it and found the fine mix-tempo piano-led rocker Rockin' Love on the other side and decided Mann was their Man. He continued to please those who liked mildly rock-up oldies like Pretend, Some Enchanted Evening, and South of the Border, and also those who craved more rock'n'roll, which Carl gave us with a revival of Clarence "Frogman" Henry's Ain't Got No Home, Carl Perkins' Look at that Moon, and Charlie Rich's I'm Coming Home, which Carl released before the man who wrote it.

Carl's take on Ubangi Stomp compares well with others who cut the classic at the Sun studio, and as a Carl Mann collection at a budget price is well worth your consideration.

John Howard



Washboard Sam Diggin' His Potatoes Jasmine

When your lead instrument is also your name, you can fairly guarantee there won't be too many ballads on this two CD collection that runs from 1935 to 1953, and contains only a fraction of the 170 commercial recordings Washboard Sam laid down.

He was a leading exponent of Chicago blues both pre-war and

post, with sidesmen often including Big Bill Broonzy, Willie Dixon, and a whole assortment of superb piano pounders, among them Memphis Slim.

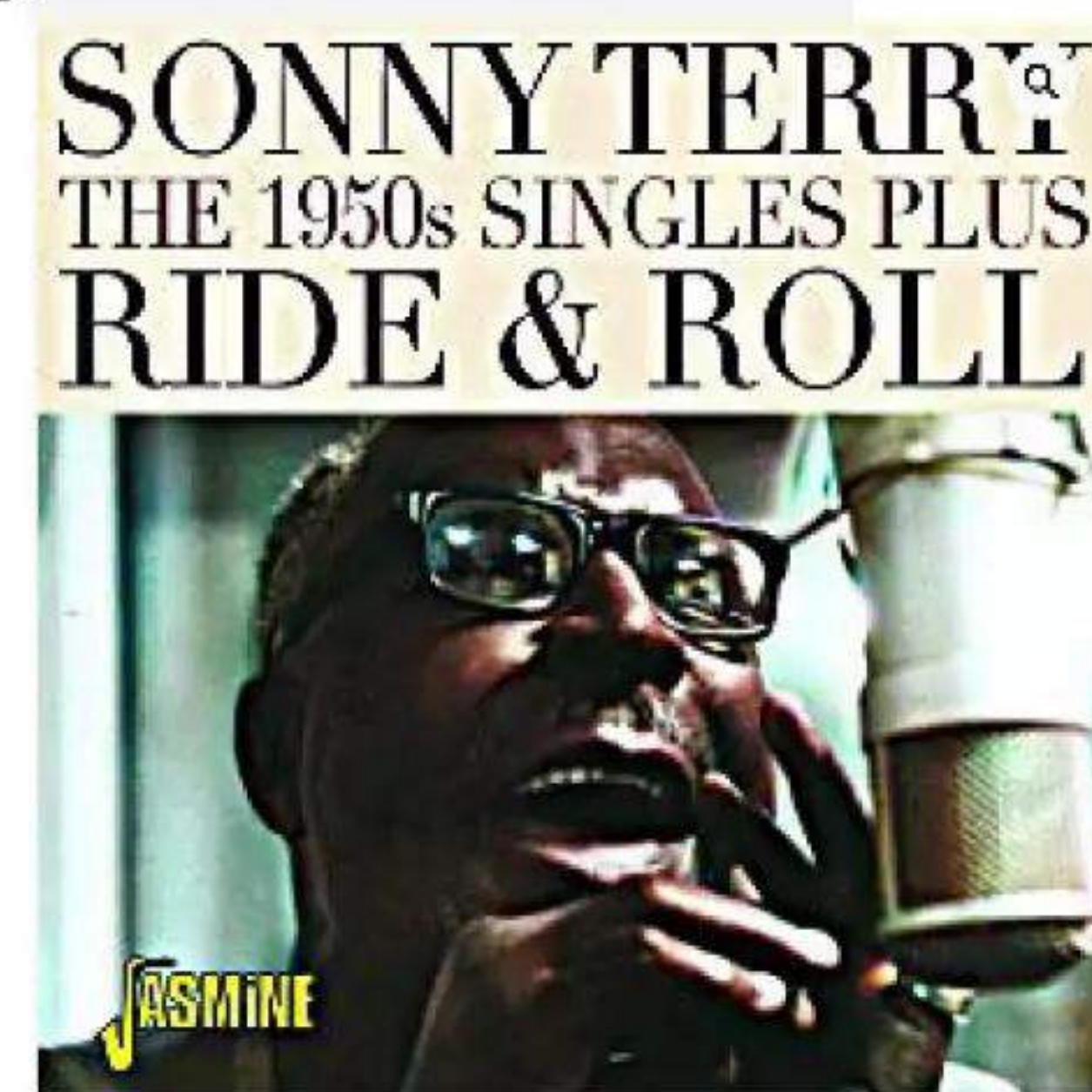
The title cut Diggin' My Potatoes was a skiffle favourite in the fifties, along with Mama Don't Allow, and despite debate as to the origin of Potatoes, it is clear here it was Trad. arranged Broonzy, although Sam recorded it first, with Big Bill on guitar.

What is also clarified here is that Sam, real name Robert Brown had the original of the oft-recorded (think Sonny Burgess and Rick Nelson) My Bucket's Got a Hole in It, since he wrote it. As compiler Roger Dopson points out that in addition to his percussive skills, Sam had a deep, strong rhythmic voice heard to great effect on material variously described as hokum and old-timey but is, in fact, a good indicator of what was to come musically.

By the fifties Sam was playing proto-rock'n'roll, so this well assembled compilation will be of interest to both musicologists and those who want to simply stomp their feet.

Hugely recommended.

John Howard



Sonny Terry Ride & Roll - The 1950s Singles + Jasmine

Sonny Terry was the harmonica-playing half of country blues duo Sonny Terry and Brownie McGhee, but his recorded output is far wider than the narrow genre that gave the musical twosome their fame.

By the mid-fifties, based in New York, both had adopted the jump

blues style that inspired early rock'n'roll and were working with full bands with saxes and pianos. Sonny's earliest recordings, generally with Brownie playing guitar, relate directly to their sixties output with harmonica and whooping to the fore, but there's a distinct switch in 1954, best typified here by a later recording of the Sonny original Dangerous Woman (with a Gun in Her Hand). It rocks like the clappers. Also interesting is another Sonny original Uncle Bud, but with its Diddley style rhythm could well have been called Uncle Bo.

Harmonica fans will find much to enjoy here, with a plethora of instrumentals, one of which, Hootin' Blues, attracted a cover by British harmonica ace Tommy Reilly, and was a favourite on Junior Choice fronted by Uncle Mac on the BBC Light programme.

A bonus track is Billy Bland's Chicken Hop which featured both Sonny and Brownie on backing.

John Howard



Various Artists Destination Hong Kong Bear Family

Here's the latest in the 'Destination' series, we're off on an aural journey to Hong Kong, or at least how American song writers and recording artists envisaged it back when times were very different. This compilation is collected mostly from music recorded in 1950's though a toe is dipped into the early 1960's too. The first thing to get out of the way is that times have changed, plenty of this material would be deemed mildly racist in today's climate, but of course it was never recorded with the

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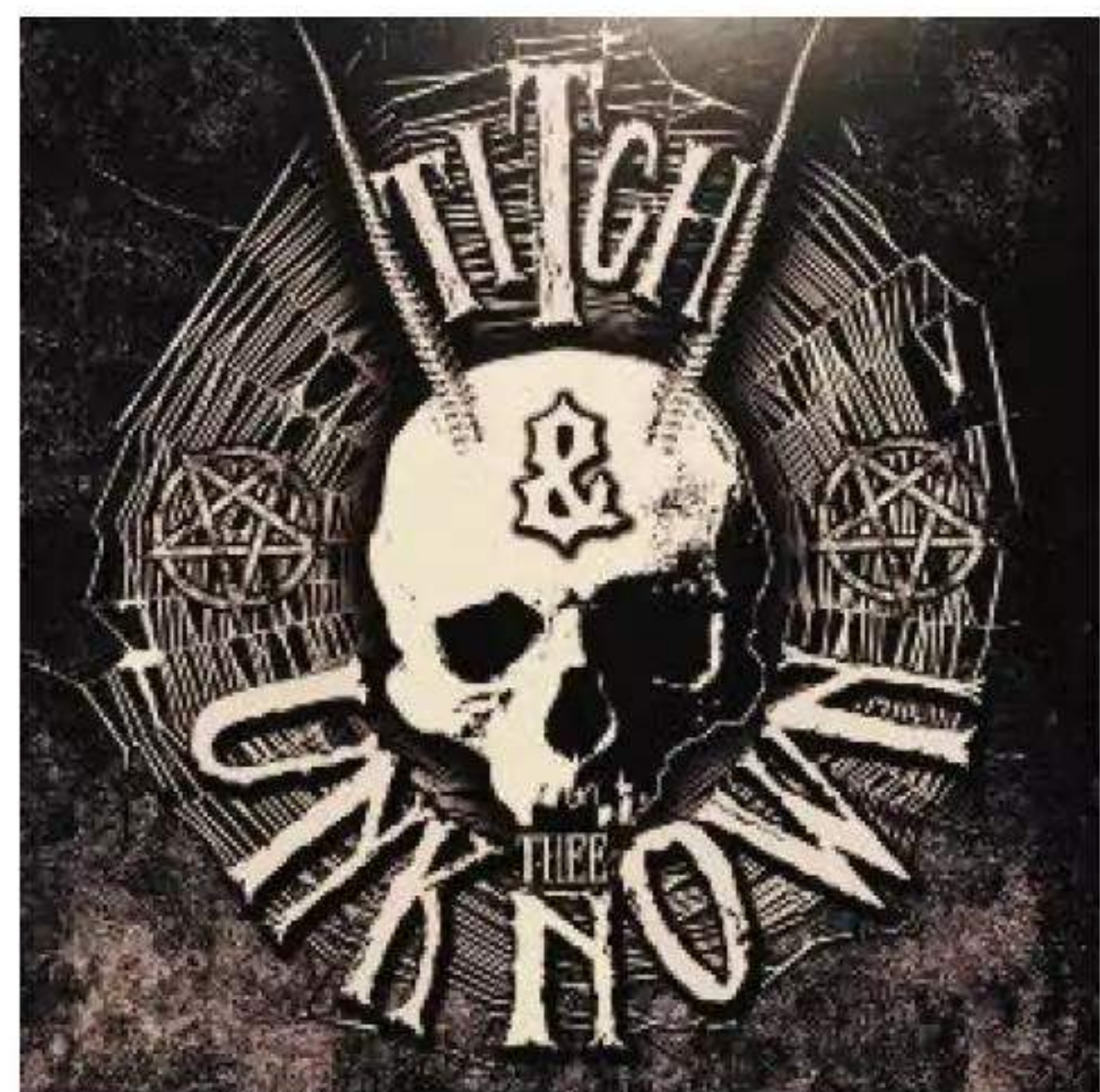
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intention to be offensive to anyone, stereotypical, cliched and of its time is probably the best description.

All the PC stuff has taken up much of the review, but there are some terrific tunes contained in this 26 tracker, standout's include Annisteen Allen's 1955 version of 'Fujiyama Mama', a hit in Japan for Wanda Jackson a year or so later.

Simon Nott



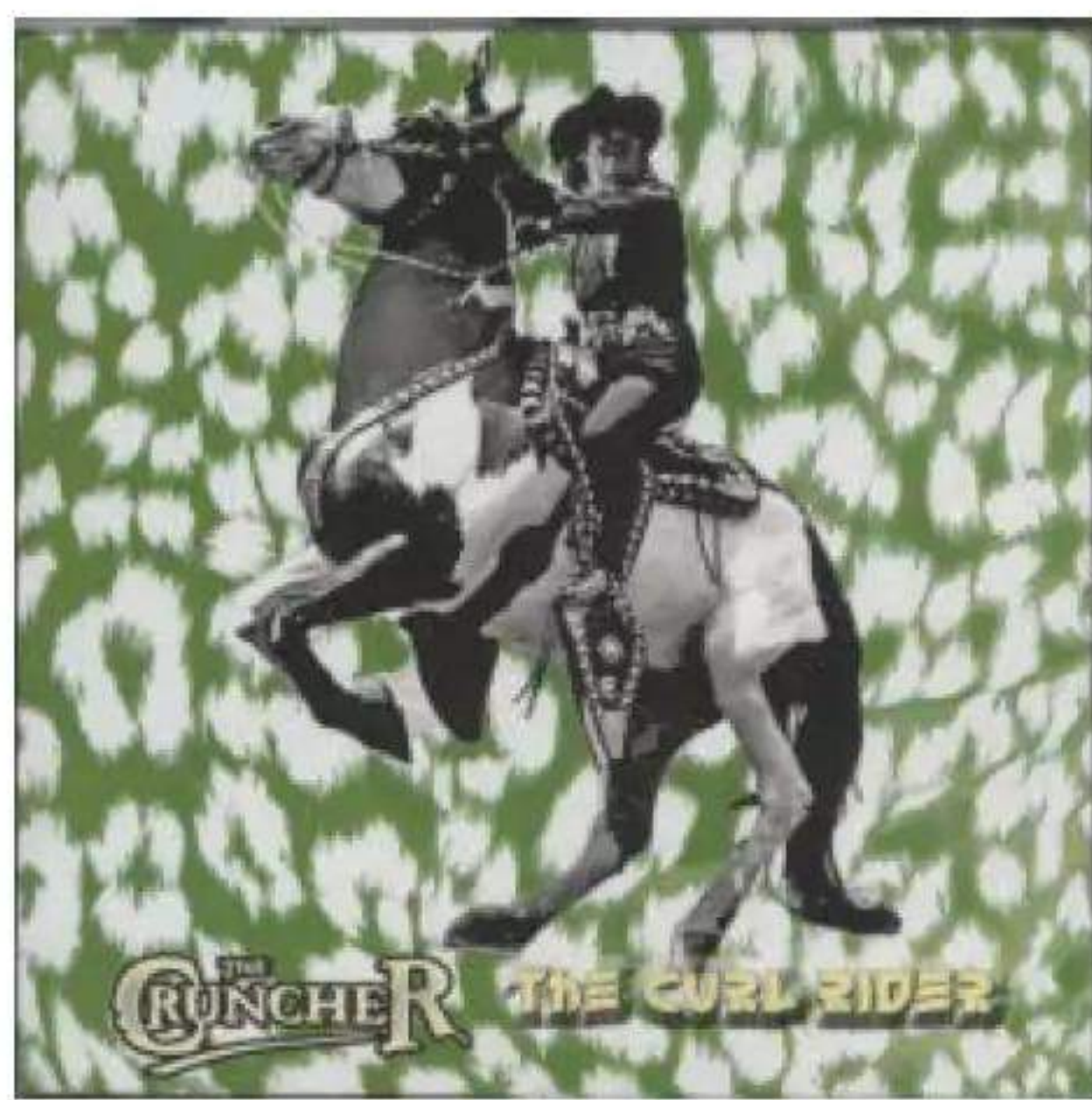
Titch And Thee Unknown Garage Wreckin Bones

This is a three track 45rpm one side and 33rpm the other, tricky bastards, coloured vinyl single. It features the unmistakable Titch of The Klingonz fame with his Unknowns and doesn't really need a review, the title sums it up.

The backing was recorded in Spain then sent over to Finland for Titch to record his vocals, it's not such a weird concept these days and certainly works in this case. The backing is solid with prominent slap bass, guitar and drums which is all the vehicle Titch needed to totally let rip on these three tracks, he's a howling manic on this 7" giving Beat-Man a run for his money on 'Come Back Bird', which takes some doing, the guitar on the same track tips him over the edge.

It's crazed, it's garage, it's psycho, it's great, get it before it's as gone as the recording.

Simon Nott



The Cruncher

The Curl Rider

NPR

Herbert Hooke, aka The Cruncher, there are covers of classics, Frankie Ford's 'Sea Cruise', Buddy Holly's 'Crying Waiting Hoping' as well as contemporary compositions, 'Shotgun Rides Again' is written by Wild Bob Burgos for example. There are several variations on the surf theme here, unmistakably modern and in most cases silky smooth in their execution. Rather than the savage jangle and barrels of surfers wiping out on gnarly breakers dare I say this is a superb soundtrack to a carefree summer's day lounging by the water rather than riding on it and is highly recommended.

Simon Nott



Various Artists Busy Bootin' Dagnabbit

This is a step back in time from what Dagnabbit have previously released, this is a collection of primitive early rocking blues, limited to 300 copies and pressed in 12" gold wax but is solid gold in what it contains. 16 uncensored

rough, raw, ready and rocking. This really is the nearest we're ever going to get to the hole in the wall gigs these artists would have performed in, anyone who loves rockabilly is going to hear loads of licks and rhythms that the hillbilly cats nicked from records like these. There's a warning about washboard overload, it's infectious, it's stomping, primal rhythm and blues.

The lyrical content of some these records is earthy as it comes and straight from the soul, searing guitars, rhythm from anything they could get their hands on and screams of encouragement abound. This record is limited to 300 copies, only 299 people other than me are going to marvel at this album, that's a tragedy. I wonder if there's enough material for a second volume, I'm already excited.

Simon Nott



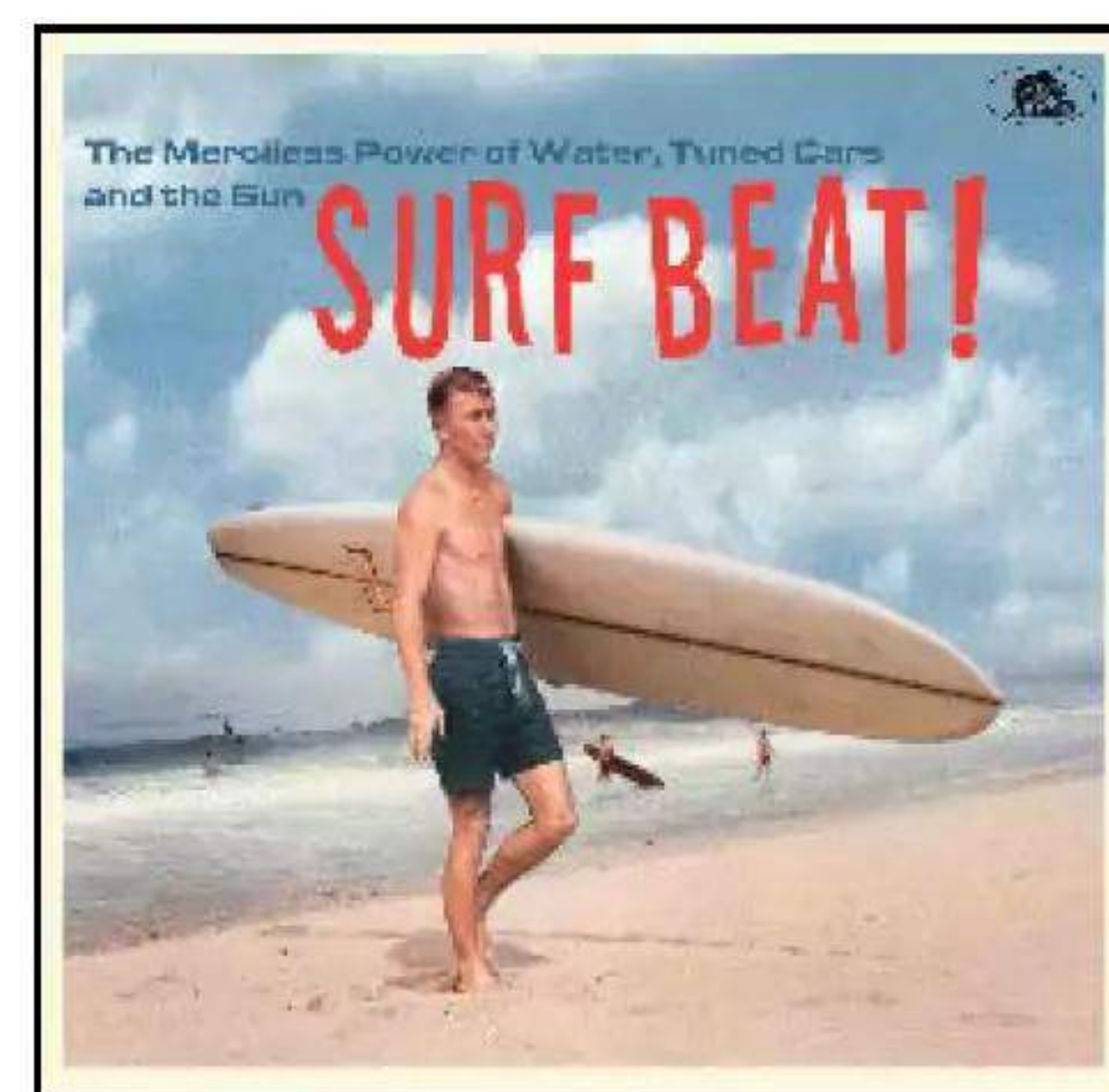
Screamin' Lord Sutch And The Savages Horrors On The Holloway Road Trophy

This is a 10" vinyl 10 track album and the latest in the series of releases based on tapes found stored in tea chests. These are largely previously unheard recordings made by producer Joe Meek at his studio on Holloway Road in the 1960's. This is the first of two based around one of Meek's most colourful artists, the late Screaming Lord Sutch. Theatrical eccentric Sutch must have been a dream come true for the master of

sound to record. This album features five of the best finished recordings including 'Jack The Ripper' and 'I'm A Hog For You Baby' on Side A, alternative takes on the other.

While the top side is reproduced in amazing clarity, it's the flip that makes this record, including two fascinating early takes of 'Jack' and 'Til The Following Night' and 'Hog' before Meek added his genius tapping Sutch's creativity an inner rocking soul.

Simon Nott



Various Artists Surf Beat Bear Family

This is a collection of savage surf beat from the mid 1960's, there are 33 tracks here and we have to wait until the very last one for any vocals of note and that's Jan and Dean calling for some audience participation and getting it.

This collection is an example of how varied the surf scene was, the proof there being that a collection of instrumentals was played back to back by this reviewer. Many of these bands were hardly household names, then or now, but as the interest in surf beat music has never waned in the past 50 years some have become the legends that they never were.

The booklet here is imperative if you're dipping your toe into the wild surf, there's no better place to start, jump on in.

Simon Nott

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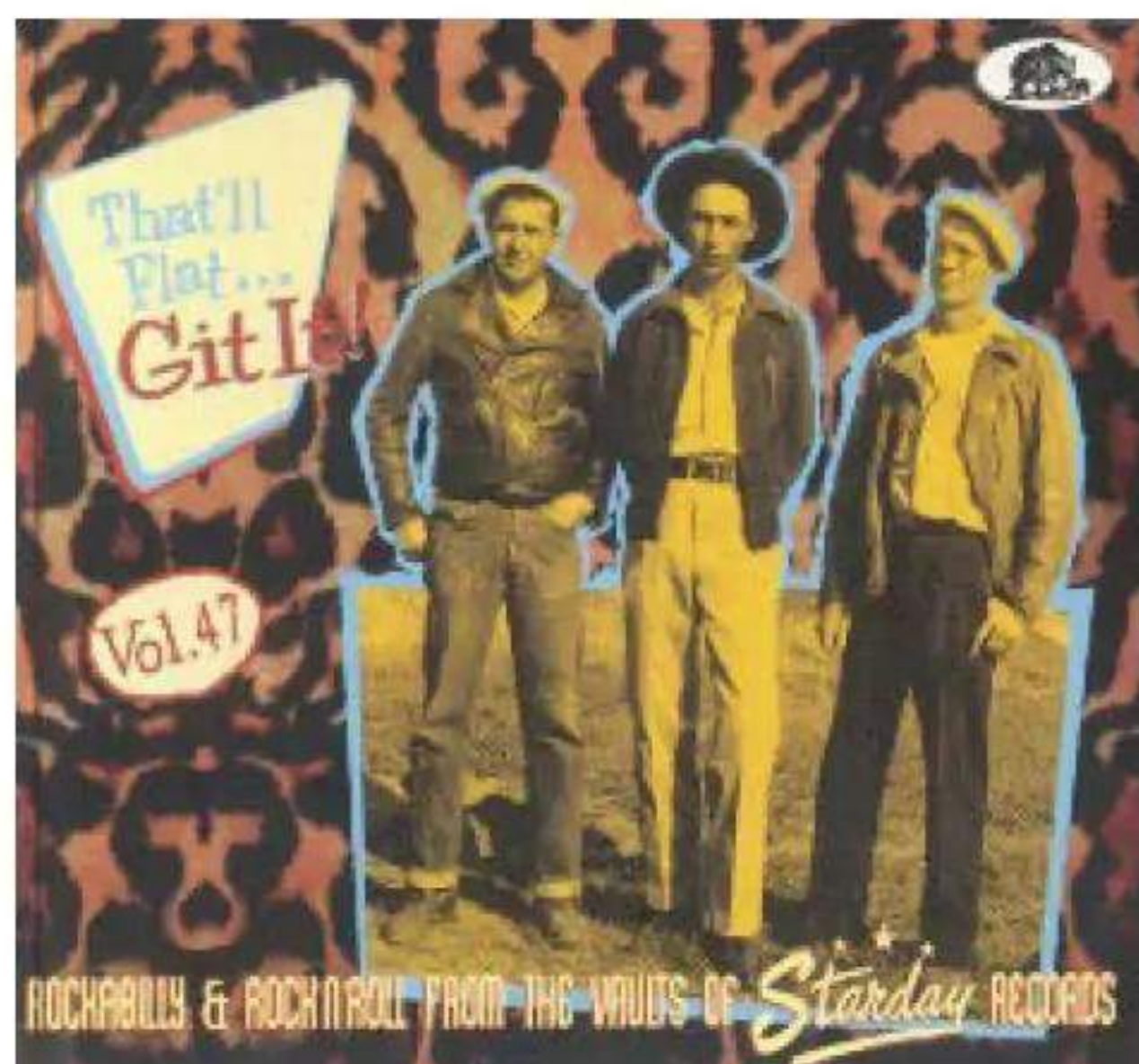
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Dukes Of Tijuana Tough Love, Taboos'n'Tattoos Western Star

'Billy Turned Psycho' kicks things off, an account of what was happening all over the UK as the youth of the day shrugged off the shackles of the teddy boy culture with rules enforced by people old enough to be their dads and supercharged the rockabilly they'd already taken as their own and rebelled with. That opener sets the scene though certainly doesn't get bogged down with psychobilly it champions either, after all that genre is older now than rock n roll was back in 1981. This is an impressive, intelligently self-penned dozen of hot rockabilly inspired rocking for the 2020's. 'Invasion Of Stupidity' is perfectly timed, though an isolated observational tune in what is a fun-packed opus.

Simon Nott



Various Artists That'll Flat Git It 47 Bear Family

This collection from the vaults of Starday Records really are the epitome of rockabilly.

Those few years from 1954 to 1957 where country music developed a beat but kept its identity. While the mainstream music industry had already started to water down the wild from the pioneers of the genre artists like Sonny Fisher were recording songs about moonshine with music and stomp inducing as raw as the drink, nobody was trying to take the rural out of Starday. This collection is the first of two volumes highlighting that joyous couple or three years where rockabilly ruled and although collectors of the genre will have heard and have most of these, to have them in one place with informative sleeve notes is a joy to behold.

Simon Nott



The Lazy Tones Laundry Sessions El Toro Records

The Lazy Tones hail from Valencia in Spain and their latest release, 'The Laundry Sessions', follows on from 2016's Juke Joint Bound. This six-track release is solid RnB: it's all Jimmy Reed and Chicago blues. They've got great vocals and harp playing and overall, a top band. It has that old style recording sound but in a modern way so it's crystal clear and has good depth. The raw and electrified sound of the band that hail from the Valencian (Spanish) blues scene are a pleasure to listen to. The musicians on this release have the experience that only comes from years of extensively touring together.

We open with a cover of 'Loan Me Train Fare' by Mississippi Heat that was featured on the 1995 album 'Thunder in My Heart'. The roots here are more recent than some of the other tracks on this release. This version is a cool journey down the tracks with the sad story of no money and a broken heart and no doubt some hooch stashed in your luggage. All aboard! A twangy descending guitar hook starts 'My Blame', a darker slice of RnB magic. It's a really good self penned track and I hope the Lazy Tones add more of their own to their repertoire as they have the knack on this track. 'Look A Here' is a good instrumental cover version of the Jimmy Rodgers song from the 1950s. It shows off the talents of the band and is a real nice version to boogie along with. 'Natural Born Lover' is another solid cover, this time of Jimmy Reed's original from the early sixties. It has all that honking harp and bumping guitar so famous for its sound. I like the swing that's in this track.

'Sloppy Drunk' is a nice stomper all about the devil's juice and the ill fates that befall us all if we dabble to much. The 40's /50's slang is sloppy drunk but I reckon since the original Jimmy Rogers release in 1954 it has been changed to sloppy, even before autocorrect text was invented!

'Baby Please Don't Go' is a cover of the classic with great rhythm and drive. The track has a good feeling that makes you want to tap your feet and grab some space on the dancefloor. For a song that has been covered more times than most this take is really good and rounds off the mini album nicely

I really liked listening to this mini album. All the tracks sound great and the band are excellent musicians. The experience they have playing together helps make this release a fun and high quality release. My one hope is that they work on some more original numbers as they have a really good vibe and I for one am always a sucker for Chicago and Delta blues influenced music.

I would recommend this mini album to anyone who likes old school RnB, so if you're born under a bad sign or left drunk in a smokey juke joint with no money, no woman/man/other other members of the human race this is for you. Recorded and played with authenticity. Enjoy!

*Ed RAZOR for
Slap That Bass
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Steppin' Out

Reports from where rock'n'roll gets up close'n'personal

Ray Gelato & The Giants, Newbury

Ray Gelato & The Giants cover jazzy swing as well as rock 'n' roll, all performed to the highest standards of musicianship and vocally, as Ray's many CDs confirm. Furthermore, he gets those brilliant sounds just as well when live on stage, as he so well demonstrated in his two sets at RetroFest. His band for the night consisted of seven men, including Ray. It featured Ray on vocals and tenor sax, with a second tenor man Olly 'The Oracle' Wilby. The rest of the band included trumpet, trombone, piano, stand-up bass and drums, just like Louis Prima with Sam Butera & The Witnesses, who are a huge influence on The Giants whole musical style and approach.

The first set included 'Seven Nights To Rock', 'Jump Jive & Wail', 'Night Train' and a Louis Prima medley based on 'Oh Marie'. All these are familiar numbers on the rock 'n' roll scene, but no-one does them better than Ray and his band. Added to these for rock 'n' roll fans was Ray's own 'Ding Dong Round One' which is on his CD 'Locked Down But Not Out' released in 2021. It's the first track on this CD, which originated during the Covid Pandemic Lockdown of 2019 & 2020 and was put together by each musician recording his own parts at home, although you

would never know from listening to the album which rocks and swings in a very classy way.

Also in the first set was the sax-led instrumental 'Brother Jay' which Ray announced as his tribute to King of the Honkers, Big Jay McNeely. Ray put this number together based on Jay's biggest instrumental hit 'The Deacon's Hop' which topped the rhythm & blues charts in America in January 1949. Ray honked, but not as wildly as Big Jay, but then who ever did! Never-the-less, this instrumental sax tribute was much appreciated.

The second set started with the band's version of 'Flying Home', the Lionel Hampton war-horse originally recorded in 1942 and a big hit in May 1943 with a young Illinois Jacquet as the lead tenor man. In the original version, Jacquet took a long solo which is commonly held up as the first recording of the honking tenor sax style that became a staple of rhythm & blues and early rock 'n' roll. Mr Big Jay McNeely was just one of many to credit this record as a massive influence. Here at RetroFest, Ray and his tenor man Olly took it in turns to blow some licks on this one, each approaching the big microphone at the centre of the stage to honk a phrase before backing off to let the

other man in. It was fabulous to see this showmanship on stage in 2024, harking back to the 1940s and 1950s. The band showed off further co-ordinated choreography in several of the other numbers too, especially Louis Prima's take on 'Buona Sera'. Straight after 'Flying Home', Ray and The Giants gave us a superlative version of Wynonie Harris' big hit 'Bloodshot Eyes' from August 1951. Ray stuck close to Wynonie's version and really nailed this one. It was a tremendous example of what a big and husky voice Ray has got and how he knows how to use it. And the band really rocked.

Louis Prima was heavily represented in this second set. In addition to 'Buona Sera', Ray gave us the medley of 'Basin Street Blues' coupled with 'Sleepy Time Down South' which Louis and The Witnesses developed in Las Vegas. Ray performed it exactly like Louis' terrific version on his 'The Wildest!' LP on Capitol Records in 1957. Later in the set, other numbers Prima made his own included 'Should I', 'You Rascal You', 'Just A Gigolo' and Ray encored with the Prima medley 'Angelina'/'Zooma Zooma'. As far as I am concerned, Ray could have performed like Louis Prima all night!

Ray peppered both sets with more relaxed jazzy numbers that still really swung, including 'On The Sunny Side Of The Street', a great song which Ray has been performing for ever – it was on one of his early CDs – 'Ray Gelato's Giants Of Jive' on Blue Horizon in 1989 – a fine rockin' CD. Other tunes included the romantic 'Smoke Gets In Your Eyes' and 'Volare' by request. Ray had just come back from a tour in Italy! There was also 'It Is What It Is' from that 'Locked Down' CD, 'My Kinda Girl' from one of Ray's vinyl LPs, 'Tickle Toe' from the Count Basie songbook, 'Mambo Italiano' and 'My Last Meatball'. For the lindy hoppers on the dance-floor, which was always full throughout both sets, Ray added Slim Gaillard's 'Flat Foot Floogie With The Floy Floy'. I wonder how many of the dancers know that a Flat Foot Floogie is African-American slang for a prostitute and Floy Floy is a black term for venereal disease!

I really appreciate the fact that RetroFest booked Ray Gelato and The Giants for two sets for us to enjoy.

Paul 'Hot Wax' Waring

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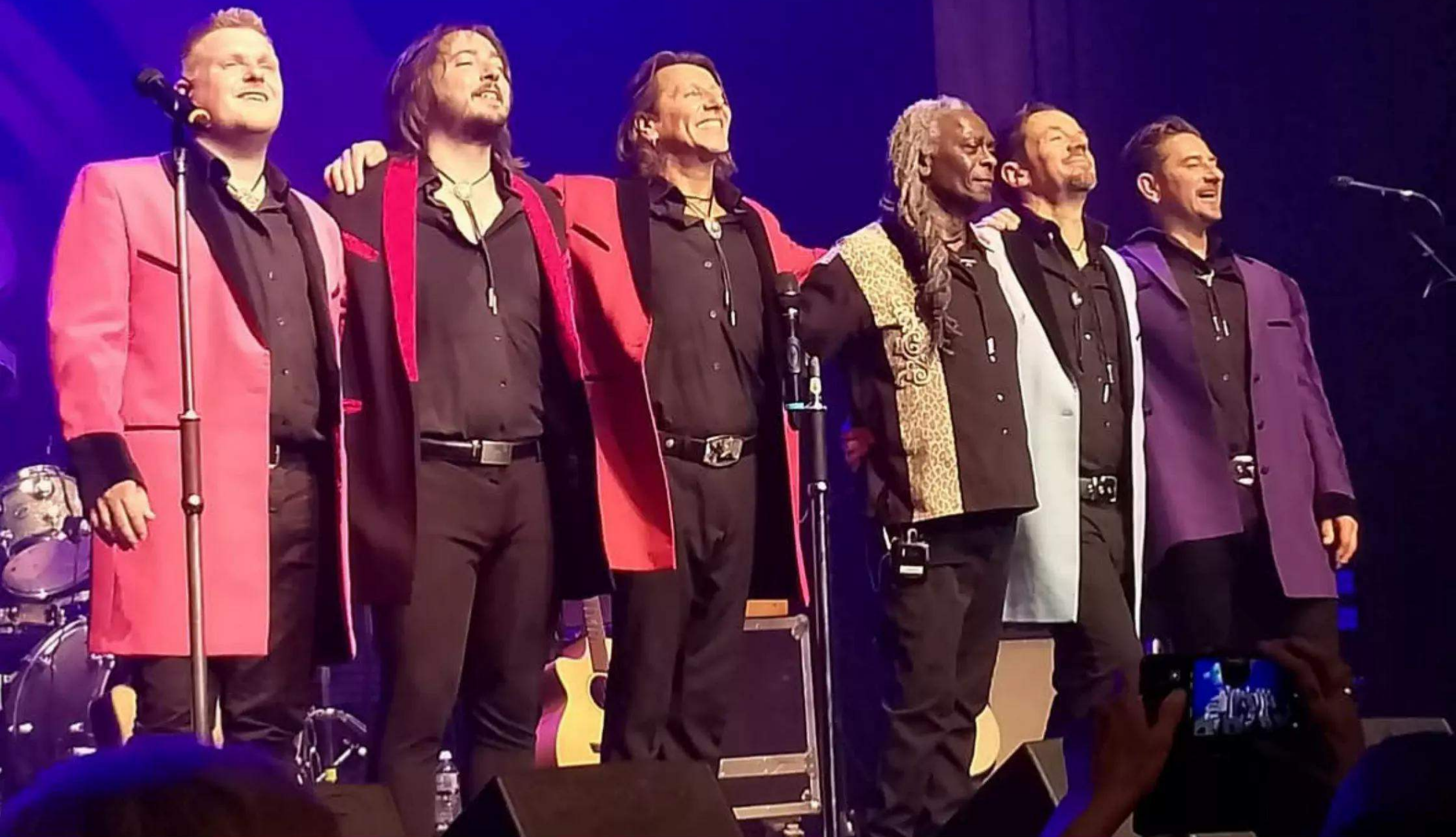
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Showaddywaddy, Glasgow



Sitting there thinking in my living room, dreaming of a girl in a limousine, I suddenly realised I was still in old Kilmarnock on a cold miserable summer's night -well, it is Scottishland-when I realised I was looking at an advert for an upcoming show from old favourites of mine. Showaddywaddy!

Dragging my long suffering wife away from her People's Friends book of 1000 crosswords, We donned our old leather-the drape and drindle have long gone - and jumping in the old jalopy we headed to the Old Mean City, picking up a couple of friends from the same vintage as us on the way, who were keen to put on their old rock'n'roll shoes. On arriving at the venue there was definitely a feeling of excitement in the air, as you could feel the floor vibrating to the wooden legs and walking sticks, not to

mention the clacking of false teeth..seriously, the crowd was as diverse as could be, from teeny boppers to ancient artefacts like us.

But like a flash of thunder there they were,draped up and ready to kick ass, thundering into "A Night at Daddy G's", and for nearly the next two hours they rocked, they rolled, they jumped, boogied and wailed like there was no tomorrow, as they paraded out a set that included, "Sea Cruise" complete with frantic choreography, "Heartbeat", "Three Steps To Heaven", in fact just about every Showaddywaddy hit you could think of, with special mentions for "Blue Moon, "Trocadero", but no, forget that, for the complete performance - wowie zowie, Little Richard would have loved it!

Throwing in knockout takes on "Rock This Town" and "High School Confidential" just for good measure, the theatre seemed to be bouncing along with the stage as the band never stopped moving throughout the show.

They continued trotting out the hits, finishing up with "Under The Moon Of Love", before climaxing with a glorious "Hey Rock And Roll", which just about blew the roof off, along with various wigs!

So there you have it, one of the most entertaining, dynamic, exciting shows seen in many a blue moon, and I know there are those among you who will say there's only one original member left, but the group, Romeo Challenger on drums, Andy Pelos on vocals since 2012,(and formerly of Malcolm Allured's "The Teddys"), David Graham,

sax, guitar and vocals,,Tom Bull, bass and vocals, Billy Shannon, vocals and guitar, whose interplay with Andy Pelos is a highlight, and Sam Holland on guitar, drums and vocals, acknowledge their past by paying tribute to all eight founding members of the group from back in 1974 - okay, they may not be the originals but this is the best line up since, and just think people still go to see Matchbox, The Eagles, The Rolling Stones, AC/DC etc, who are in the same position, but when the descendants can turn on performances that are not tributes but celebrations, long may they continue to be "The World's Greatest Rock 'Roll band"! - and as for our old pals who were also there way back in the glorious 1950's , they loved it!

Tony Allan

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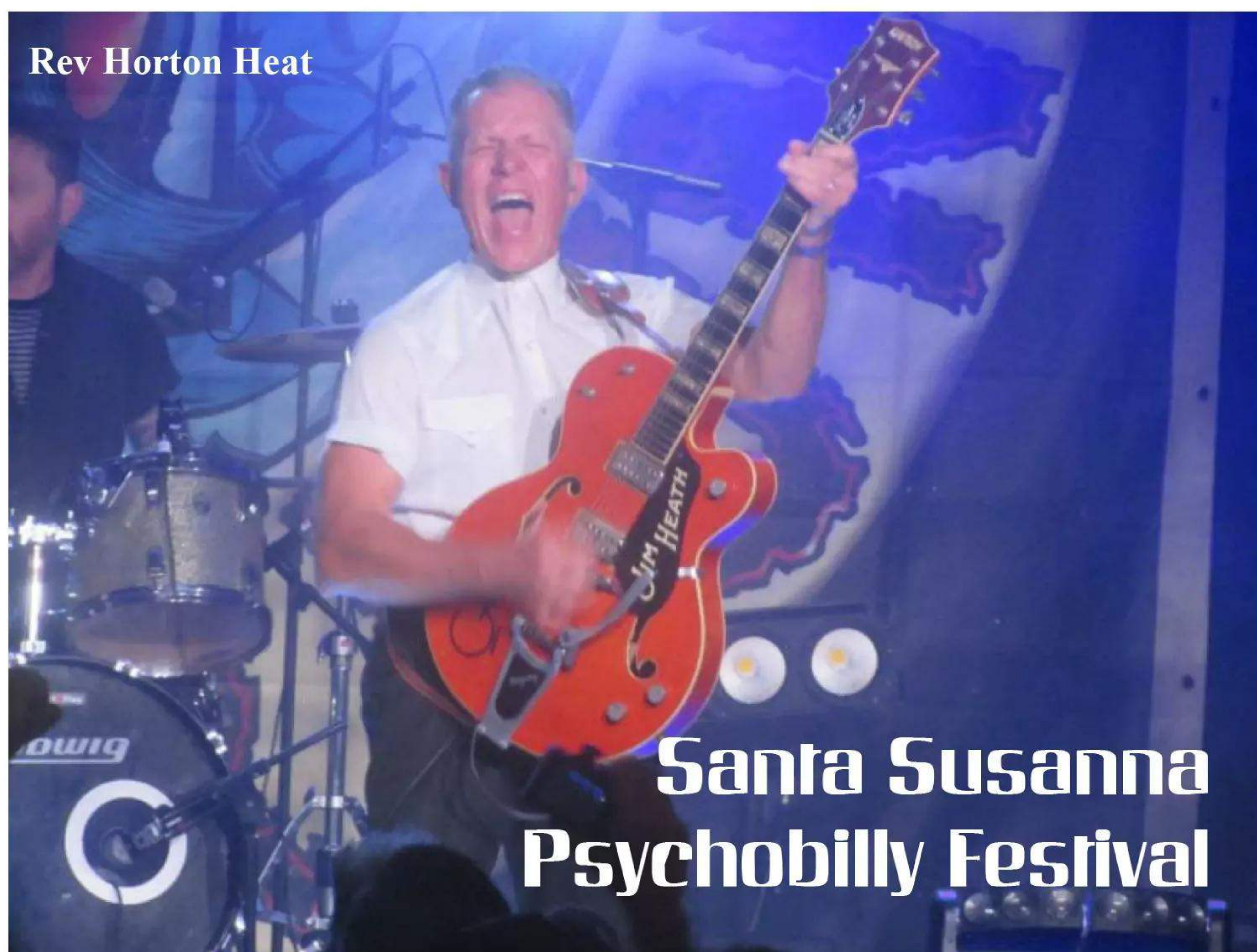
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29th August - 1st September 2025

Rev Horton Heat



Santa Susanna Psychobilly Festival

This was the festival that nearly wasn't. With just a week to go before the festival, to be held in Santa Susanna, one resort further up the coast from Pineda where the festival had been held for at least the past ten years, it became apparent that the authorities would not consent to music on the beach in a tent. I can only imagine the stress that Raquel de Nour and her team must have been under as they sought an alternative venue. The first that I really knew was when I took a taxi from Pineda station to the Mercury Hotel in Santa Susanna, which had apparently stepped in at the last minute to host the first afternoon session of the week. In truth the venue offered far more space than the usual Santi's bar. This was a psychobilly pool party and as usual the amount of beer consumed by the billies must have made it worth it for the hotel.

The next part of the adventure for this year's Psychobilly Meeting involved taking a bus with a load full of psychobillies to the venue for the evening's proceedings. And the venue was set up in the hills above Santa Susanna,

a stone-built edifice that was really quite attractive though the concert hall itself was indoors, and it was a trifle hot to say the least. The first night of the festival was Swedish night and kicked off with the Intolerants who last played the festival quite some years ago and who had actually been inactive for some of that intervening period. Since I last saw the band Junior had left the band to be replaced by young Robert, but Mattias was back on double bass and the rest of the band remained the same. The band put on quite a good show, though it perhaps lacked some of the energy of their performance from years ago. Next to the stage were one of the real innovators of the scene, the Test Pilots. Fronted by two truly exceptional musicians in Mattias on double bass and vocals and Anton Eriksson on guitar, these fine Swedes have carved out a niche for themselves that I have, elsewhere, termed progressive psychobilly. This can be heard perhaps most clearly on their latest release *Wasteland* on Bad Billy Records, but also on their exceptionally good *Urban Mirage* mini-album on Western Star. From his finger-tapping technique to his

harmonic colourings Mr. Eriksson is, without doubt, one of the guitarists of his generation and it is always real pleasure to see this excellent band. Following such a terrific band is never going to be easy, but the Small Town Pimps put in a very commendable effort with their brand of hard-edged rockabilly.

Day two of the festival began with an afternoon pool party at the Mercury Hotel with German band the Dukes of Tijuana, then fast forward a few hours and the evening session is opened by Barcelona-based psychopunks Prisoners of Society who give a live showcase of their mini album released a few months ago. They have plenty of enthusiasm and energy and get proceedings off to a very good start. Next to the stage and returning to the festival for the first time in over ten years were the Klingonz. Something of a Marmite band, this was undoubtedly the best performance that I have seen from this group of Irish lunatics. Opening the set with the raucous 'AIB', and taking in 'Werewolf Boogie' alongside covers such as

'How Long You Wanna Live Anyway' and 'Too Drunk to Fuck, the band puts on a very fine performance musically as well as a fine visual spectacle, not least thanks to Shakes' fire beathing and sword swallowing exploits. It was then the turn of King Kurt who have really begun to enjoy a purple patch helped, in no small part, by the addition of a keyboard player. Opening the set with 'Road to Rack and Ruin' the band works its way through a tremendous back catalogue of crowd-favourites including 'Horatio', 'Destination Zulu Land', 'Rockin' Kurt', and 'Wreck a Party Rock' to pick just a few examples. This really is a band on fine form. Next, there was a switch around with the Delta Bombers opting to surrender their headline slot as they had a several hundred-mile drive ahead of them. The band, of course, was without singer and defining character of the band Chris Moinichen. In his place was none other than the psychobilly pin-up boy Pip Hancox of the Guanabatz, looking quite resplendent in his Chinos, white t-shirt and armed with a white Gretsch acoustic guitar. In truth, I think that he did a pretty good job. He doesn't have quite the bluesy growl and wail of Mr. Moinichen, but at no point does he really struggle with the material. The band appears to go down well with the punters. However, I genuinely have little idea of how much support there will be for the band in the provinces, or of whether or not Pip sees the project extending beyond the band's current and rather extensive tour of Europe. In any case the band appears to enjoy themselves on stage with Pip stripped to the waist and an otherwise, quite conservative, Andrew Himmler stripping from the waist down, at least to his boxers, such was the heat in the venue. To the final act of the night, the wonderful Long Tall Texans, a band that is so utterly dependable in terms of delivering the goods. From

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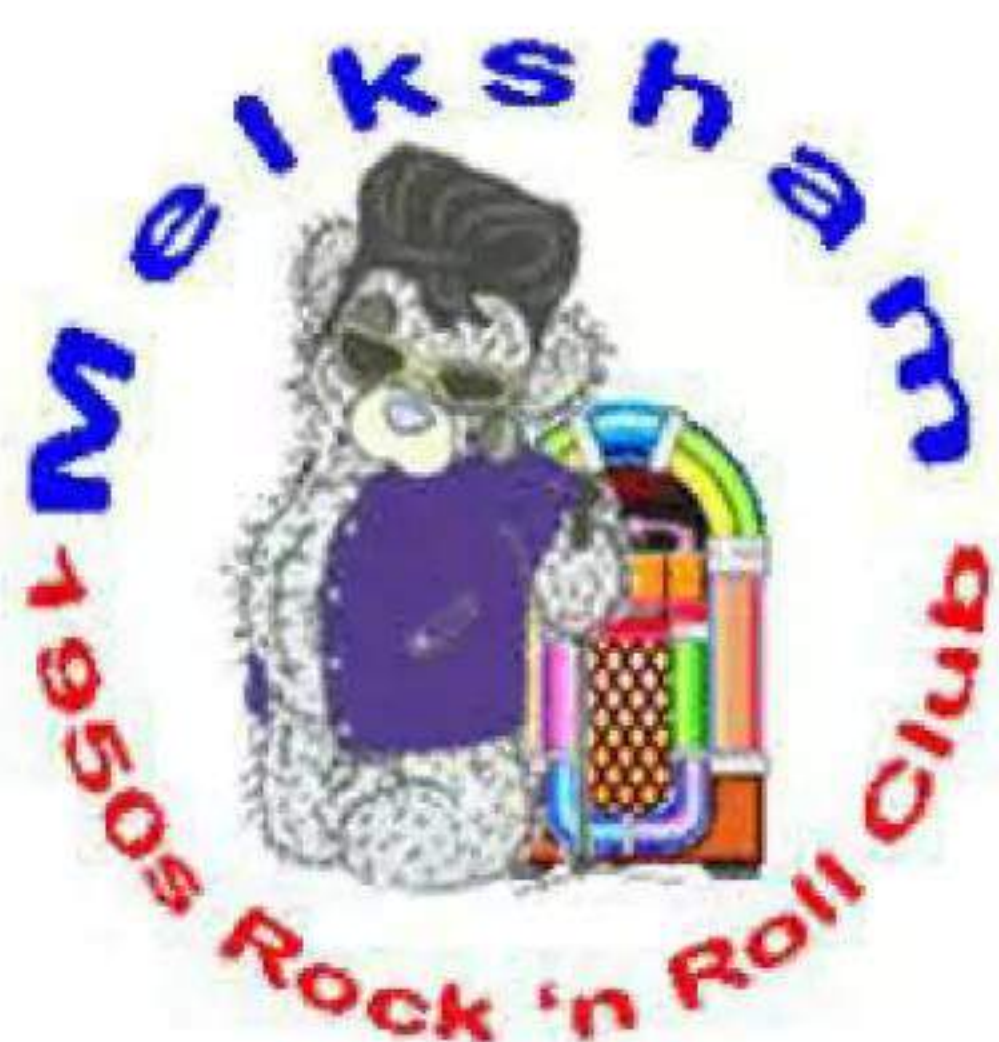
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Next Dance – Saturday 19th October – The Rhythm Aces

‘Saints and Sinners’ to ‘Girlfriend’ the band demonstrates ably why they have been one of a very select few at the top of the psychobilly tree for the past forty years. Tonight, the band is in its four-person form with Matt and Laurence accompanying founding members Mark Carew on bass and vocals and Theo on drums. This is actually my favourite configuration of the band, with Matt and Laurence trading licks and solos. And, of course, the appearance of little Ronnie Carew singing along with his Dad to ‘Headless’ was rather heart-warming.

Friday night got off to an unexpectedly good start with a band that I was hitherto unaware of, the Moggies. Hailing from Italy they were a really, rather, good rockabilly band. If that wasn’t enough to put me in a good mood, the appearance of Mad Marge was sure to raise the spirits further. Having first discovered Mad Marge in the noughties, I had waited almost twenty years to see her. And she was certainly very easy on the eye, indeed she might accurately be described as looking like Katy Perry whilst sounding like Gwen Stefani, she certainly has some lungs on her and put in a fabulous performance. Next up were Swedish, somewhat surf-inspired band the Coffin Shakers who put on a very enjoyable show. Next on the bill were one of my favourite acts in the form of Anglo-Swiss innovators the Hillbilly Moon Explosion. Riding high on the back of their superb Back In Time album, this always fabulous live band put in one of the performances of the festival, exceptional musicianship from guitarist Duncan James, drummer Silvain Petite, bass-player and vocalist Oliver Baroni and sublime vocals of Emanuela Hutter make this band a must see.

Following hot on the heels of HME were the incomparable

Demented Are Go. With a career-spanning greatest-hits set, this was a typically supreme performance from the gods of the deranged on the eve of their latest album release. A cover version of Howlin’ Wolf’s ‘Spoonful’ provides a snapshot of the album to come. This leaves only Mad Sin to close the show. With the apparent



departure of Manny to Booze and Glory, Koeffte had called upon no less than Rene de la Muerte, of the Brains, to take the second guitar spot alongside the genius that is wunderkid Andy Kandil. And what a fine replacement to have, with the band not missing a beat and putting in a truly rambunctious and fist-pumping performance.

Saturday evening got off to a terrific start thanks to the mesmeric Radios., Followed by the fabulous threesome from Switzerland the Peacocks. It has, unfortunately, been several years since I last saw this band play live. But, within a couple of bars of the first song ‘Don’t Ask’ my enthusiasm for the band was reignited. They have the knack of writing very catchy melodies and crafting superb pop songs. They really are very good indeed, and if you are unfamiliar with them, I urge you to check out any of their albums or to catch them live. Next were the Rhythm Shakers who put on a very solid show. Frenzy then took

to the stage and delivered a superb set choc-a-bloc full of classics including ‘Clockwork Toy’, ‘Misdemeanour’, and ‘I See Red’. With fourteen years since the band’s last album ‘In the Blood’ I would like to see another one. The penultimate act, making a return to the festival, were Paul Roman’s The Quakes. Bringing a taste of new wave to psychobilly

the Quakes are an innovative band who deliver a catchy set of songs including material from their brand new album Western Bop. The final act of the evening with their juggernaut sound were Kim Nekroman’s the Nekromantix. Playing all of the favourites such as ‘Gargoyles Over Copenhagen’ and ‘Who Killed the Cheerleader?’ the band puts in a crowd-pleasing set that rounds off a superb night of music.

Sunday night kicks off with a band all the way from the Pacific, Prison of Blues, put on a fine show of old school psychobilly. Next to the stage and making his first appearance at the festival it’s Bob Wayne and the Outlaw Carnies. Playing his own unique style of Honky Tonk country, Mr. Wayne delivers a splendid set including ‘Til the Wheels Fall Off This Mother Fucker’, ‘Everything’s Legal in Alabama’, and ‘Dope Train’. Bob is simply a joy to behold. Next to the stage were Mark Pennington’s Caravans, with Lee Barnett and his

terrible Barnett restored to the drum stool. These are great musicians with an impressive back catalogue ranging from the superb rockabilly of ‘Easy Money’ to the harder edged stuff such as ‘No Mercy’. It really is a delight to see the band following the advertisements for the band’s last ever gig which mercifully never happened owing to Covid.

Finally, to the headline act and to my mind, at least, the master of psychobilly the Reverend Horton Heat. Jim Heath has taken a genre that was essentially European, albeit with obvious American influences, and has reclaimed and rejuvenated it with his fabulous guitar-playing and his ability to craft the most wonderful and frequently amusing songs. So alongside the familiar opening of ‘Big Sky’ we were treated to Five-O-Ford’, ‘Big Little Baby’, ‘Five Hundred Bucks’, ‘Psychobilly Freakout’, ‘Bales of Cocaine’, ‘Whole New Life’ and more. It was simply magical.

This effectively concluded this year’s festival except for the farewell party held at the beach bar in Santa Susanna. Featuring the one and only Bob Wayne accompanied just by his double bass player, this was a superb stripped-down set that absolutely rocked. Indeed, it provided a wonderful ending to an outstanding week of music. I have omitted reference to just two. Bands, the Wigsville Spliffs and the Hyperjax, both of whom played afternoon slots at the beach bar, that I fear, I was too exhausted to attend, but both of whom, I understand, delivered superb sets. Quite where the festival will be next year, Santa Susanna or Pineda, car park or on the beach remains to be seen, but one thing is certain, I shall be there. I look forward to seeing y’all there.

Nick Kemp

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Psychobilly Corner

As the dust settles on another epic week at the Psychobilly Meeting in Spain attention focuses once more on gigs on the home front and there is quite a lot to be happy about.

On Thursday 22nd August, Pete Hanscomb plays host to Cavegirl and the Neandergals with support from Blue Black Sky at the Anchor in Wingham, Kent.

On Friday 23rd August, Thee Gravemen play the Kromagnon Club at the Ill Repute, in Bristol

On Saturday August 24th, Shake Some Acton is at the Water Rats in King's Cross with Cavegirl and the Neandergals with support from Tuesday Violence, Thee Gravemen and the Go Go Cult

On Friday 30th August, Rockaway Beach hosts the Zip Heads, Dead Hombres and the Altermoderns at the Hope and Anchor.

On Saturday 31st August, Psycho Sinners present a superb bill at the Prince Albert in Brighton headlined by the splendid Death Caps with the Bitter Pills providing excellent support. On the same day down in Cardiff at the Royal George, Lambo and Mezzers' birthday bash promises an eye watering night of music headlined by the Shakin DTs with support from the Sin Kings, the Resurrected, and Planet Strange.

Also on 31st August, Paul Mason is putting on his annual Rockin' the Boneyard Festival in support of the Prostate Cancer Ward at Nottingham City Hospital, to be held at Bunker's Inn and featuring the Zip Heads, the Surfin' Wombatz, the Creepfreaks, the Gruffs, the Windom Earls,

Galloping Dick, and the Bad Stars.

Saturday 7th September sees Dave Diamond's Boomerang Club return to the Fiddler's Elbow in Camden for a night of superb rockabilly with Restless headlining and support coming from Fever. On the same day on the west country there is a rather cool festival: the Broadbeat, Rock n' Roll and Surf Music all-



dayer headlined by Big Boss Man, with ample support in the form of the rather wonderful Palooka 5, the Racketeers, the Crystal Teardrops, the Tuppeny Bunters, Cave Girl and the Neandergals, the Cocktail Shaker Go Go Girls, and the Silver Dream Machine Disco at the Broadway and Horton Cricket Field.

New Kings of Hong Kong album, Sonic Thrills, is about to be released, initially a short run on CD, and then on vinyl on Trash Wax, KoHKs fifth album, maintaining the usual spirit of weird and wonderful Rock n' Rolla.

Steve Midniter has been in touch regarding a Killer Tone Jones collaboration. Their new single is released on 20th September. Cover of Johnny Kidd track 'Please Don't Touch' with Serena Sykes of Bamboozle providing vocals along with KTJ.

Demented Are Go release their first album in twelve years on Bad Billy Records in Oct/Nov. Whilst on the subject of Demented, former

Kings Of Hong Kong

sticksman Criss Damage takes on vocal duties with the Haunted Men whose debut mini album is available now on Bandcamp.

On Saturday 5th October the Hangmen play the Northern Social in Pontefract with support from Henry and the Bleeders, the Sinictones, the Teenage Zombies, and Planet Strange. On Saturday 12th October, the Hangmen play Grumpy's in Stoke on Trent, on Friday 18th, they play the Bull in Gateshead, on 19th they play the Shed in Bedale, and finally on November 2nd they

play the Star and Shadow in Newcastle.

The GB Motorcycle Halloween Extravaganza, takes place at GB Motorcycles, Canal Street Longport, Stoke on Trent on Saturday October 26th, featuring Restless, the Hicksville Bombers, the Kingshakes and the Maybellines, and kick-off is 3pm.

The Delta Bombers begin their tour of the UK, with Pip Hancox of the Guanabatz on vocals, in October. They play: St. Stephen's, Ipswich, Wed 23rd Oct; The Face Bar, Thurs 24th Oct; The Underworld, Camden on Fri 25th Oct; Brudenell Social Club, Leeds on Sat 26th Oct.

The Koffin Kats visit our shores as part of their European tour playing just two gigs in blighty: November 2nd at the New Cross Inn and November 3rd at the Redrum in Stafford.

Also on tour in November are the Monsters who play: the Black Prince, Northampton, Wednesday 13th Nov; Music Hall, Ramsgate, Thurs 14th Nov; the Albert, Brighton, Fri 15th Nov; Amp, Stockport, Sat 16th Nov; Broadcast, Glasgow, Sun 17th Nov; Cabaret Voltaire, Tues 19th Nov; Cluny, Newcastle, Wed 20th Nov; Ne Bar, Stockton, Thurs 21st; Twenty One, Southend, Fri 22nd Nov; The Moth Club, London, Sat 23rd Nov.

And on rather sad news Stage Frite have decided to call it a day. They play their final gig on Saturday 28th September at the Dove Inn, Alburgh, Norfolk.

Until next time – stay psycho!

Nick Kemp



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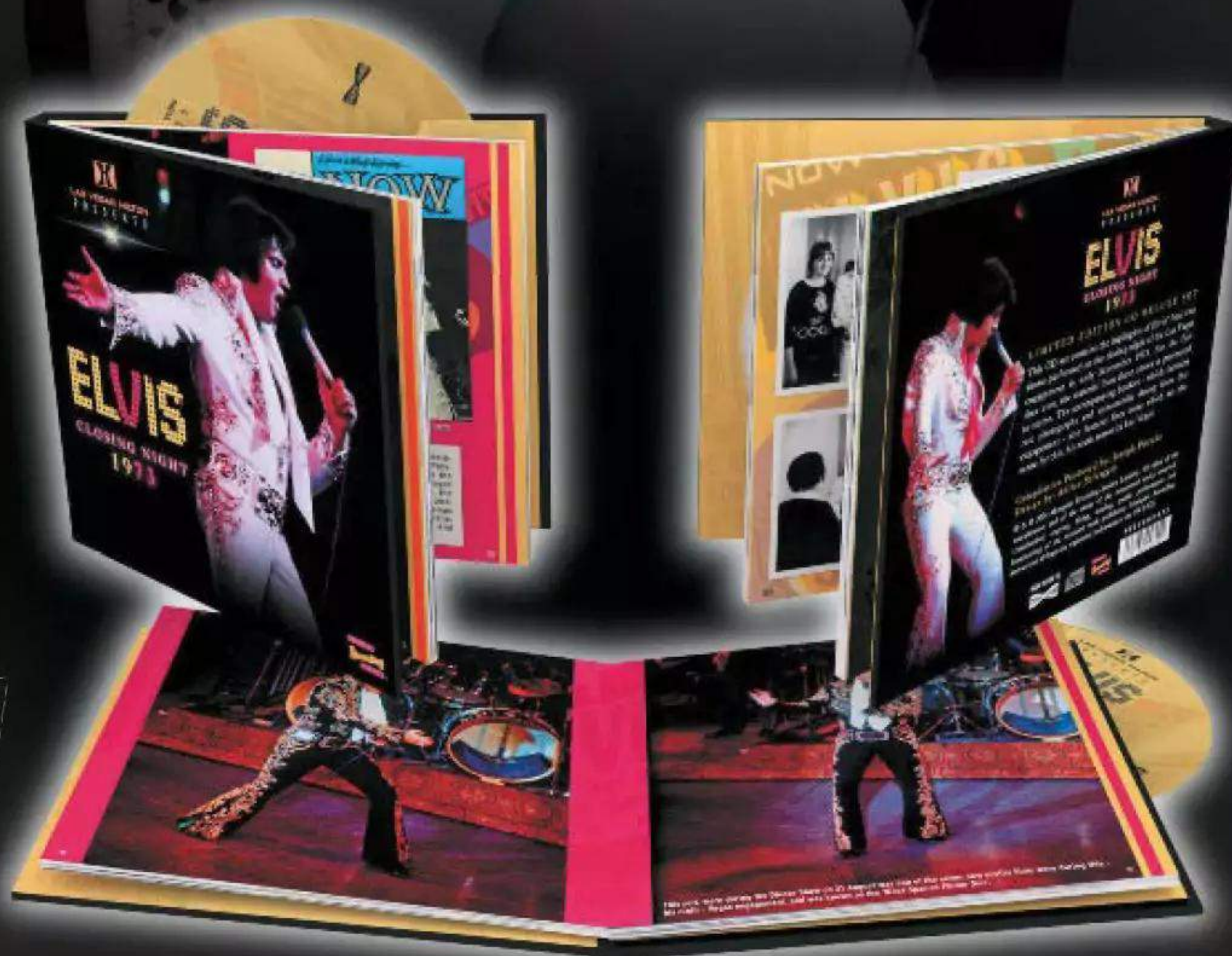
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